

Republic of Serbia
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Inclusive Education:
Roadmap
National Report of the Republic of Serbia

Belgrade, 2008

The development of the National Report of the Republic of Serbia *Inclusive Education: Road to the Future* was coordinated by the Working Group of the Ministry of Education. Cross-sector consultations were organized in the course of the process, which were supported significantly by the Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point, Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Ministry of Finance, Serbian European Integrations Office, Institute for the Improvement of Education, Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation, UNESCO Office in Belgrade, UNICEF Office in Belgrade, Council for Child Rights, professional associations and non-governmental organizations.

The Report is based on the official data of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia, the data, recommendations and conclusions published in the publications by the Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point¹ relating to the field of education and based on the data and information of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia and The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Furthermore, the Report contains data from research conducted by various institutions and organizations which participated by submitting their inputs, as well as quotations from published works of different authors, thus contributing significantly to the development of inclusion in the society and the education system.

Terminology used in the development of the Report is given in its original form, as provided in the submitted inputs and available publications.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the National Report of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the associates working to prepare the Report for publishing in Serbian and English.

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia

¹ Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia, 2007
Enabling Access to Written Materials for Persons with Visual Impairments, 2008

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ACRONYMS

AIDS/HIV	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development of the United Kingdom
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EFA	Education for All
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MS	Master of Science
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
REF	Roma Education Fund
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SEIO	Serbia European Integration Office
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VET	Vocational Education and Training

1. SUMMARY

The National Report of the Republic of Serbia will be presented at the 48th session of the International Conference on Education to be held from November 25 to 28, 2008 in Geneva and shall be devoted to the topic: *Inclusive Education: Roadmap*.

The first goal of this report is to present the situation in the education system of the Republic of Serbia from the perspective of inclusive education. Through broad consultations, numerous government and non-governmental organizations, research and professional institutions, citizen's associations and international and intergovernmental organizations participated in the preparation of the report.

The second goal of this report is to contribute to the development of a new inclusion policy, culture and practice in the Serbian education system by pulling together the experiences related to inclusive education, recognizing the weaknesses of the current system, identifying the main stakeholders and by creating a platform for further cooperation and networking among them.

The experience acquired in the field of inclusive education was the starting point in preparing the contents of the report, and also in defining its structure. Following the requests of UNESCO, the National Report of the Republic of Serbia includes a review of: *System of education in the Republic of Serbia; Education of vulnerable groups; Inclusive education; Initial teacher education, employment, placement, working conditions and the professional development of teachers; Goals and main characteristics of current and forthcoming reforms; Achievements and lessons learned; Decade of Roma inclusion; Support measures for development of inclusive education*, with the drawing of conclusions and the offering of recommendations for future work.

The Republic of Serbia has a network of 159 preschool institutions, 1246 primary schools, 569 secondary schools and 14 higher education institutions. *Main rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders in education system* are: accessibility, opportunity to be educated under equal conditions at the entire territory of the country; quality education; equal opportunities for the education of children and students with developmental disabilities; prohibition of discrimination at all grounds; stimulation of students to achieve the best attainable education and get involved in the process of life-long learning; maximum horizontal and vertical mobility within the system; free education for elementary pupils and regular students of secondary schools founded by the Republic of Serbia; right to higher education for all persons with formerly finished secondary education²; autonomy of education institutions at all education levels and academic freedom of higher education institutions.

In the period 2000-2008, the development of education in Serbia was marked by the following key changes:

(1) *Stable growth of the investment rate in the field of education* (from 2.7% in 2001 to 3.7% GDP percentage in 2007), *salary growth and investment into restructuring and equipping school buildings*.

² Exceptionally, under conditions set forth by the statute of a higher education institutions, the right is given to a person without previously attained secondary education

(2) *Development of education policy and reform*, with two different stages - first, 2000-2004 and second, 2004-2008. *Main changes in the period 2000-2004* were: New education development strategy based on analyses and local consultations; The Law on Foundations of the Education System (2003); New institutions for providing support for the education development; Introduction of professional standards for teachers; New regulation of curricula based on outcomes and standards; New system of quality assurance; School development planning as mandatory; Increased school autonomy; Liberalized school book publishing policy etc. Effects of these changes were not fully realized, since the reforms were paced down after the year 2004. *Changes in the period 2004-2008*: The adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2005, which marked the beginning of the process of harmonization with the Bologna process; New curricula at universities; Decreased length of studying period from 11 years in 2001 to approximately 7 in 2007; Continuing with piloting new educational profiles in secondary education; Vocational Education Development Strategy (2006); Experimental classes in 146 vocational secondary schools; New information technology profile in grammar schools, with two classes in 11 schools in Central Serbia; The project *School without Violence* in cooperation with UNICEF, in around 10% of elementary schools in Serbia; Mandatory pre-school education initiated in 2006.

This Report also points out *a number of vital challenges for further development of the education system*, like: Low quality of education according to the results of PISA studies in 2003 and 2006; The low level of the inclusion of Roma children in the education system; The inclusion of children with disabilities in kindergartens and schools has not been systemically resolved; Not sufficient attention for the additional needs of poor children in regard to education; Underdeveloped system for acquiring basic literacy for adults, re-training and professional upgrading; The percentage allocated from the GDP for education is still low and inside that percentage, evidently low are allocations on the account of education programs.

From the strategic point of view, *key areas for improvement of the education system* are: (1) Ensure accessibility of education - increase coverage of children at all education levels; (2) Prevent discrimination in education; (3) Provide quality education for all children (including Roma, marginalized, deprived, and with development disabilities); (4) Develop vocational education in accordance with the requirements of the economy; (5) Acquire vocations, creating conditions for continuous learning and accessibility to higher education; (6) Develop higher education; (7) Establish a modern system of financing; (8) Establish a system of quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation.

Education of vulnerable groups as a part of the entire educational system is regulated by the Law on the Foundations of the Education System (2003, 2004), which is based on the principle of accessibility of education, quality education for all and non-discrimination. However, the Law does not clearly define the inclusion instruments and measures that should support the policy, practice and culture of inclusion. Law against Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, is the legislative act in Serbia, which explicitly addresses the right for education under equitable conditions for all children. Children with developmental disabilities are in Serbia predominantly educated in special schools³ or special classes in

³ These schools are specialized for educating pupils with mental, physical and/or sensory disabilities, and children are referred to the school based on a doctor's commissions' referral.

regular schools. On the territory of Serbia these schools are oriented towards large towns. Special classes in regular elementary schools (one or more classes for students with development disabilities) existed in 90 regular elementary schools in the academic year 2007/2008.

The Report emphasizes respect for the principle of equal opportunities when it comes to the inclusion of representatives of ethnic minorities in the educational system, in particular through the entitlement to selecting the language of instruction at all levels. Through the committees for education of the national councils of the ethnic minorities, members of ethnic minorities are included in the process of developing the curriculum in subjects that are of ethnic importance (*native language, history, music and art history, and native language with elements of national culture*).

Law on Higher Education has inclusive regulations, like: recognizing the right to higher education to persons with disabilities; obliging the founder of a higher education institution to provide financial resources for the equipment and study conditions for students with disabilities; prescribing carrying out of the study program in the language of a national minority or in a foreign language, if such a program has been accredited, as well as the possibility of organizing and carrying out studies for students with disabilities in a sign language; providing equal quality of study conditions for students with disabilities; right to difference and protection against discrimination; envisaging the possibility for students with disabilities to take exams in the manner adapted to their abilities. Statutes adopted by the higher education institutions additionally guarantee equity and equal studying on all grounds to all students. In comparison to the previous five year period, there is a 20% increase in the number of students at the higher education level, 18% increase in the number of teachers and a 50% increase in the number of higher education institutions. In spite of these changes, there is still a low level of higher education coverage of youth from the poorest population, families with low education attainment and Roma youth.

The Report identified the mechanisms and activities expected to be a part of *pro-poor education policies* and have positive impact on the *social inclusion*, concerning accessibility and efficiency of education, increase in the education level of the overall population, stimulation of the inclusion of students from all vulnerable groups in regular schools, professional development policy in line with the requirements of economy, further enhancement of higher education, as well as opening of systemic opportunities for adult education.

Initial training of teachers is a part of higher education system. The application of the Bologna Declaration has contributed to the introduction of new subjects and modules in teachers' training colleges, some of which relate to the inclusive approach to education and contribute to skills and knowledge of future teachers in this field. Professional development of teachers is provided through accredited programs of professional development. The Report indicates an increase in the number of accredited programs in the field of work with children with developmental disabilities, although the number of the programs is still insufficient.

Long-term priorities of the education policy in Serbia underlying the *current and forthcoming reforms* are: equality, equity and social justice, in particular in terms of access to

education; quality and competitiveness in the European framework and efficiency of the education system. Based on all Serbian education policy documents and analyses, the following actions are needed in order to create a more conducive policy environment for inclusive education: Increased education coverage of children/students with disabilities; Preparation and training of staff to involve all children/students into mainstream education (changes in the basic education of teaching staff); Harmonization of current legislation and adoption of new education-related regulations; Normative regulation of development and implementation of individual educational programs (IEP) and evaluation of child/student achievements; Architectonic adaptation of facilities to the needs of all beneficiaries of an education institution; Cooperation with the local government, which should dispose of sufficient budget funds in their financial plans and programs for financing the previously surveyed needs of education institutions at their territory.

Key achievements and lessons learned from already implemented inclusive programs and projects identified in the Report are concerning significant professional development of teachers, successful promotion of inclusive practices, partnership between institutions and NGOs in inclusive practices, piloting a program for functional primary education of adult Roma, broad implementation of experimental programs in vocational schools etc.

As the Roma population in Serbia has especially low education attainment indicators, in the framework of the *Decade of Roma Inclusion*, the Ministry of Education has implemented so far in cooperation with governmental, intergovernmental and non governmental organizations numerous activities, like: affirmative action measures for enrolment to secondary school and faculties, functional basic education of Roma, protection of Roma children against discrimination in education etc. Up to now, the main achieved results are: 16 educational advisors appointed as responsible for Roma education improvement; Implemented local action plans on Roma education improvement; Increased enrolment of Roma children into preschool education; A Model on introducing Roma Assistants into instructional activities has been developed and 28 Roma Assistants have been engaged in 26 schools. Further systemic measures are identified for improving educational opportunities for Roma population.

As *support to inclusive education*, there are four types of measures: Support measures and resources for school development; Measures and resources for the protection of the right of the child in the education system; Measures and means of support to student standard in the system of education and other measures of support in the process of education, like social welfare measures.

Finally, the Report provides conclusions on the current situation and recommendations for the future work. The *conclusions* underline: 1) low coverage of children with pre-school education, in particular the rural children, children from families with low education level, Roma children, children with developmental disabilities; 2) lack of data on the enrolment and finalization of elementary school, in particular for the abovementioned groups of children; 3) a significant number of youth without finished secondary education and a vocation; 4) all the more favorable attitude of kindergartens and schools towards inclusion; 5) insufficient harmonization of legislation in the field of education with the principles of the Law on Fundamentals of the Education System; 6) lack of systemic solutions for providing support and procedures and mechanisms for achieving inclusive education; 7) the Law on Fundamentals of the Education System does not envisage

the engagement of assistants in regular kindergarten groups and/or regular school classes attended by children/pupils with developmental disabilities; 8) the dominant concept of special/separate education in the access to education of students with developmental disabilities; 9) the Law does not stipulate individual education programs as a measure of individual work with the child/student with developmental disabilities; 10) obsolescence of the Law on Schoolbooks and Teaching Tools which does not regulate the adaptation of schoolbook formats for the needs of students with developmental disabilities; 11) lack of adequate institutional, program and human resources basis enabling accessibility of formal education for adult illiterate persons and adults without elementary education; 12) insufficiently developed and inadequate formal education system for adults with disabilities; 13) insufficiently adapted organization, working methodology and contents for adults, wherefore they use the “second chance” insufficiently to acquire general secondary, vocational and professional education in the formal system.

Recommendations relate to the introduction of systemic measures and mechanisms for solving each of the problems identified in the conclusions, reformation and harmonization of legislative regulations in the field of education, usage of various opportunities which are not law-prescribed as mandatory, yet do not prevent their implementation (for example, engagement of assistants for working with children/students with developmental disabilities in the regular education system), professional development of teaching staff with the aim of awareness raising on inclusive education, as well as the development of models, standards and encouragement of education of adults and adults with disabilities.

2. INTRODUCTION

The National Report of the Republic of Serbia will be presented at the 48th Session of the International Conference on Education to be held from November 25 to 28, 2008 in Geneva and devoted to the topic: *Inclusive Education: Roadmap*

2.1. Context

Republic of Serbia: Basic Information

Table 1: Basic Information on the Republic of Serbia⁴

Geographic position	Europe, central part of the Balkan peninsula
Size	88,361 km ²
Population	7,498,001 ⁵
Capital City	Belgrade
Political System	Parliamentary democracy
National Composition	Multi-national and multi-confessional state – Serbs (the predominant nationality – 82.86%) and 37 other national communities and ethnic groups of different confessions – the three most numerous minority groups being: Hungarians (3.91%), Bosniacs (1.81%), Roma (1.44%)

Table 2: Review of the Population of Serbia

TERRITORY	TOTAL	SERBS	MINORITY COMMUNITIES
	number and percentage	number and percentage	number and percentage
SERBIA	7, 498, 001 – 100%	6, 212, 838 – 82.86%	1, 285, 163 – 17.4%
Serbia Proper	5, 466, 009 – 100%	4, 891, 031 – 89.48%	574, 978 – 10.52%
Vojvodina	2, 03, 1 992 – 100%	1, 321, 807 – 65.05%	710, 185 – 34.95%

⁴ Until 2006. Serbia was part of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro

⁵ According to the latest population census in 2002

2.2. Goals, Methodology and Structure of the Report

The goal of this report is to present the situation in the education system of the Republic of Serbia from the aspect of inclusive education. Through a process of broad consultations, numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations, research and professional institutions, citizen's associations and international and intergovernmental organizations participated in the preparation of the report.

The second goal of this report is to contribute to the development of a new inclusion policy, culture and practice in the Serbian education system by bringing together the experiences related to inclusive education, recognizing the weaknesses of the current system, identifying the main stakeholders and by creating a platform for their further cooperation and networking.

The experience acquired in the field of inclusive education was the starting point in preparing the contents of the report, and also in defining its structure. Following the requests of UNESCO, the National Report of the Republic of Serbia includes a review of: *the general elements of the education system* in Serbia, such as the legal and strategic framework for the development of education, the goals of the development of education, the organization, structure, management, responsibility, characteristics and financing; the accessibility of education to various social groups; the concept of inclusive education; the policy of curricula, i.e. educational material; the goals and main characteristics of the present and upcoming reforms; the accomplishments and lessons learned from the previous educational reforms, with conclusions and recommendations for future work.

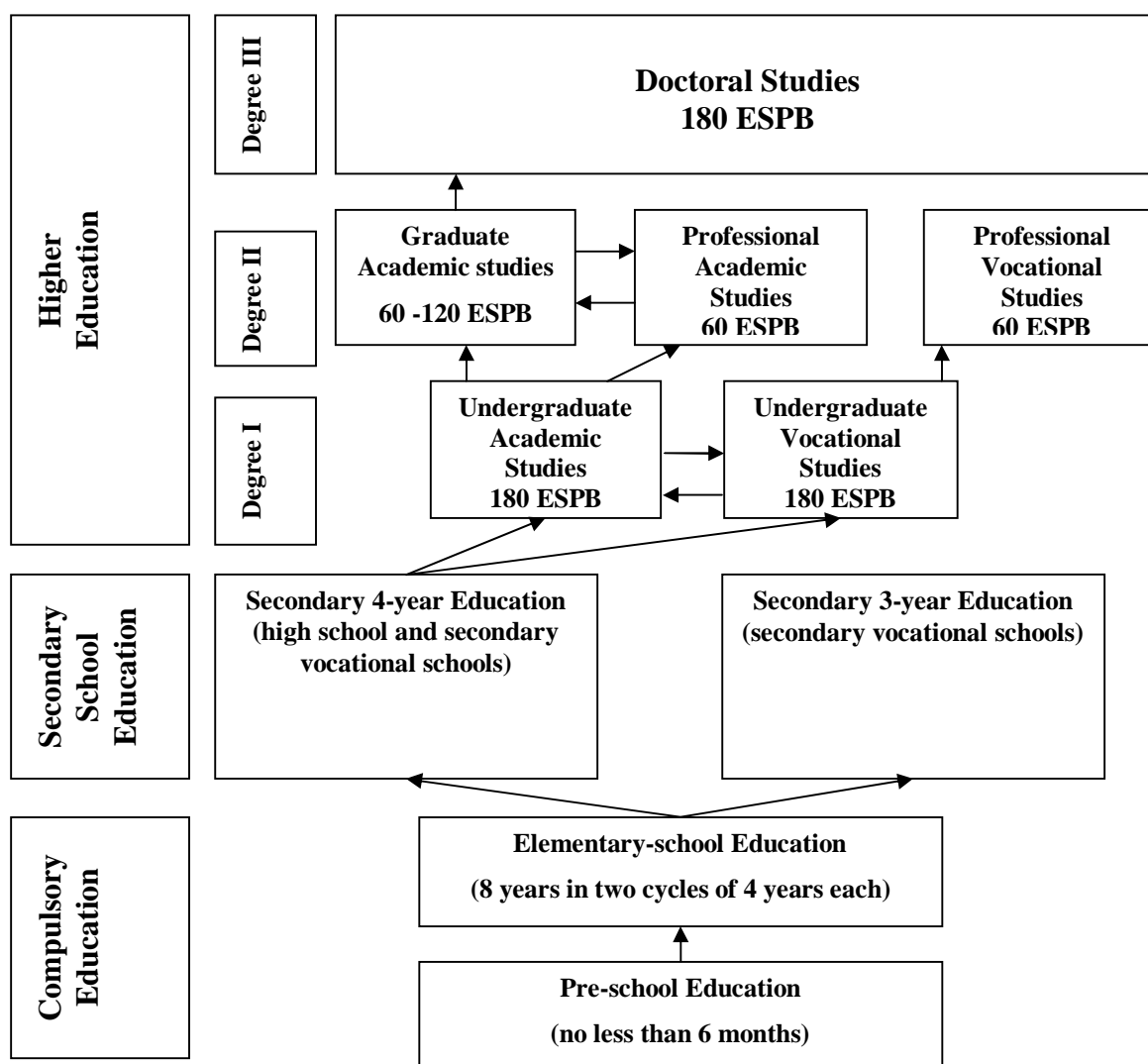
3. SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

3.1. Main Characteristics of the Education System

3.1.1. Organization, Structure and Management of the Education System

Education in Serbia is provided: *in pre-school education* – by pre-school institutions (kindergarten) or exceptionally schools; *in elementary school education* – by elementary schools, elementary schools for adult education, elementary music schools/ballet schools and elementary schools for the education of pupils with disabilities; *in secondary school education* – by the secondary school, as follows: high schools (general and specialized), vocational schools, mixed schools, art schools, secondary schools for adult education and secondary schools for students with disabilities.

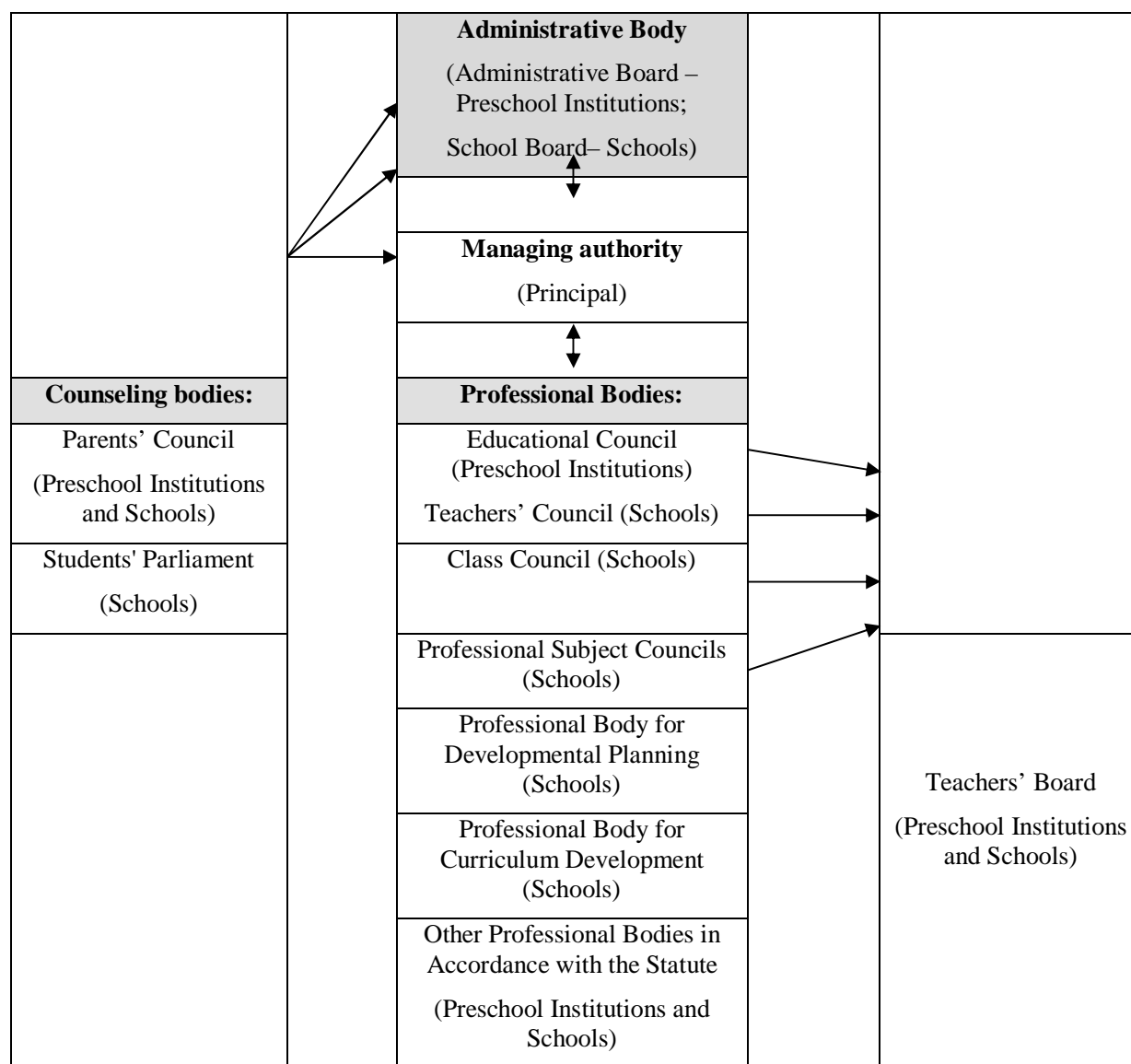
Figure 1: Organizational Structure of the Education System in the Republic of Serbia



Institutions of *pre-school education* also carry out the compulsory preparatory pre-school program lasting a minimum of six months. *Primary school education* is obligatory for a period of eight years. It is implemented through two educational cycles: the first cycle – grades 1 to 4, organized through grade school, and the second cycle – grades 5 to 8 through courses/subjects. *Secondary school education* is implemented as general secondary school education (high school of the general type, science-mathematic and social-linguistic) and vocational education (secondary vocational schools lasting between three and four years).

Educational institutions (preschool institutions and schools) have administrative bodies, managing authorities, as well as professional and counseling bodies.

Figure 2: Governing Bodies of an Educational Institution



Higher education is carried out by higher education institutions: *universities; schools (faculties)*, i.e. *arts academies within the universities; academies of vocational studies; colleges and vocational colleges*. Higher education is implemented through academic and vocational studies on the basis of accredited study programs within the following educational-teaching, i.e. educational-art fields: natural-mathematic sciences; social sciences and the humanities; technical and technological sciences and art. There are three degrees of higher education, as presented by Figure 1 and Figure 3.

An institution of higher education has administrative bodies, managing authorities, professional bodies and the students' parliament.

Figure 3: Presentation of the Organization of the System of Higher Education

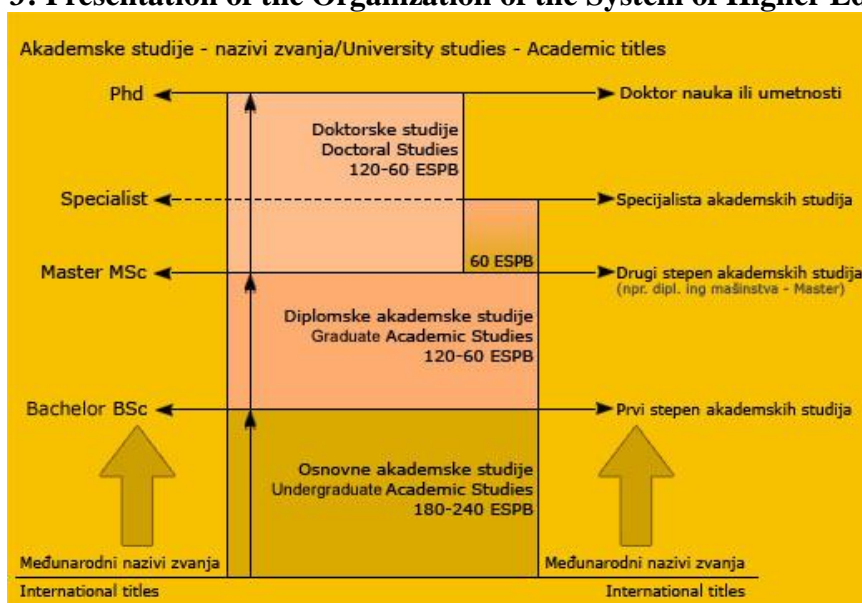
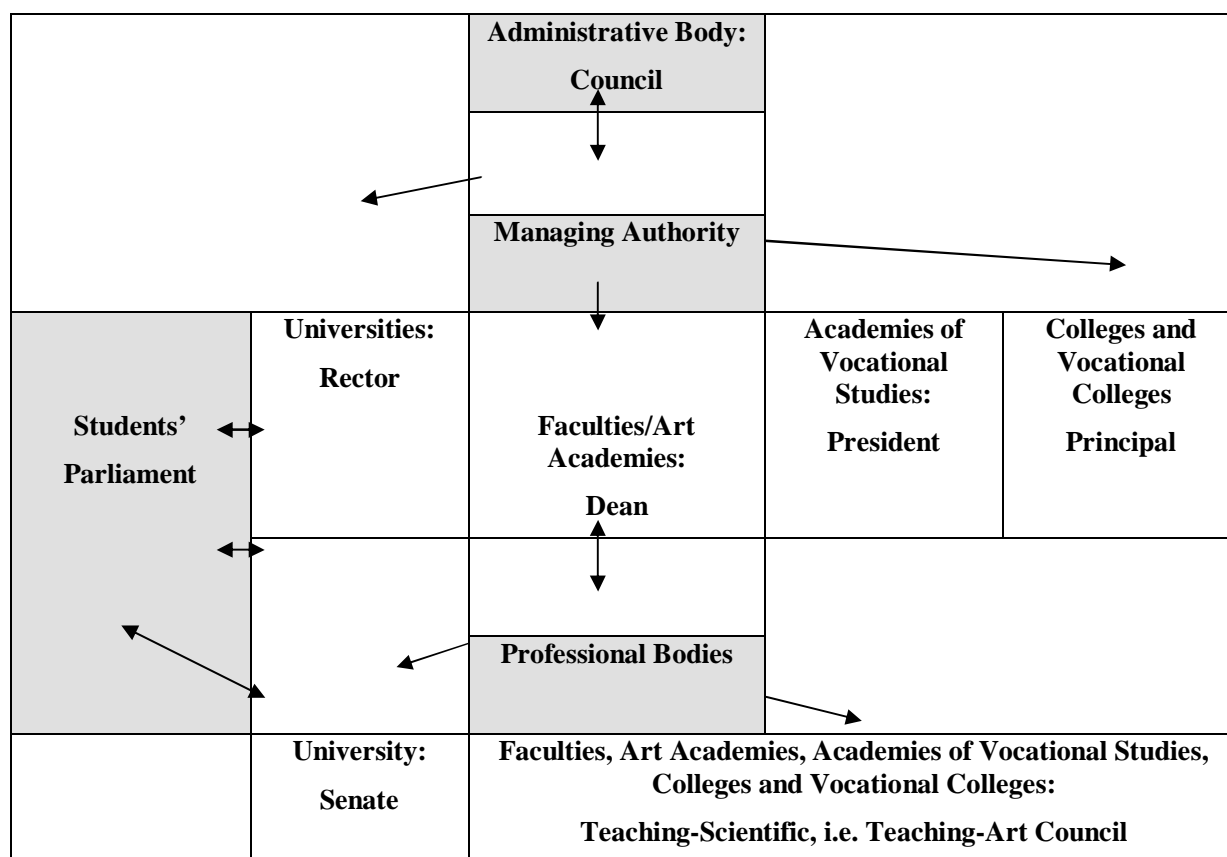


Figure 4: Bodies of the Institutions of Higher Education

3.1.2. Network of Educational Institutions

The Republic of Serbia has a network of 159 preschool institutions, 1246 elementary schools, 569 secondary schools and 14 higher education institutions. The document on the network of preschool institutions and elementary schools is adopted by the Government on the basis of the following criteria: the number and age of students in a certain region; the specificities of the area (mountainous region, bordering region, insufficiently developed region, ethnically mixed region); the developmental specificities of the area based on the established needs for employment; accessibility and equal conditions for acquiring education; the security of communication; the financial abilities of the Republic.

Table 3: Pre-school Institutions in the Republic of Serbia in 2007.

			Distribution of children in pre-school institution groups								
	PRE-SCHOOL INSTITUTIONS TOTAL 159		Mainstream groups			Developmental Groups for Children With Disabilities			Hospital Groups for Children Undergoing Hospital Treatment (Lengthy Treatment)		
	Total Number of Children	Total Number of Groups	Number of Children	Number of Groups	Number of Teachers	Number of Children	Number of Groups	Number of Teachers	Number of Children	Number of Groups	Number of Teachers
BELGRADE	46,032	1,336	45,174	1,269	2,538	158	24	48	700	43	38
VOJVODINA	48,827	2,203	48,640	2,162	4,324	116	38	47	71	3	5
SERBIA PROPER	72,678	3,399	72,146	3,351	6,702	216	33	52	316	15	15
TOTAL	167,537	6,938	165,960	6,782	13,564	490	95	147	1,087	61	58

Table 4: Elementary Schools in the Republic of Serbia at the Beginning of the School Year of 2005/06.⁶

	Total				GENERAL PRIMARY	SPECIAL	MUSIC	ADULT EDU.	BALLET
	Schools	Classes	Students	Teachers					
SERBIA PROPER	863	22,158	486,292	34,062	769	33	47	12	1
VOJVODINA	383	8,321	180,701	13,507	344	13	21	3	2
Total	1,246	30, 479	666,993	4,7569	1113	46	68	15	3

In Vojvodina 344 elementary schools have 224 subsidiary classes.

In Serbia Proper 863 schools have 2,254 separate classes. In Serbia, 7 private elementary schools have been verified.

⁶ Source: Ministry of Education

Table 5: Number of Secondary Schools in the Republic of Serbia at the Beginning of the School Year of 2005/06⁷

REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS 2005/06														
Beginning of School Year														
Total			High Schools					Vocational	Mixed		For Pupils with Disabilities	Arts		
			Sub-total	out of which specialized					Vocational and High Schools	Vocational and Art		Music	Fine Arts	Ballet
				High schools		Classes								
				Number	Type	Number	Type							
Schools/ Classes	Students	Teachers												
STATE-OWNED														
539/ 10,114	288,026	26, 618	111	6		16		317	37	4	29	32	6	3
PRIVATE														
30/156	2,841	680	10	3				20						
TOTAL														
569/ 10,270	29,0867	27,298	121	9		16		337	37	4	29	32	6	3

In the field of *higher education*, there are 14 universities, 7 state-owned and 7 privately owned in Serbia.

Table 6. Names of Universities in the Republic of Serbia

Universities Founded by the Republic	Universities not Founded by the Republic
University of Belgrade	Braća Karić University, Belgrade
University of Arts in Belgrade	European University, Belgrade
University of Kragujevac	Megatrend University, Belgrade
University of Niš	Singidunum University, Belgrade
University of Priština temporarily seated in Kosovska Mitrovica	Union University, Belgrade
University of Novi Sad	International University in Novi Pazar
State University of Novi Pazar	Academy of Economic Studies, Novi Sad

⁷ Source: Ministry of Education

3.1.3. Key Institutions and Their Competencies in the System of Education

There are several institutions which have responsibilities with respect to education. The following Table presents their competencies.

Table 7: Key Institutions and their Most Important Competencies in the System of Education in Serbia

Institution	Competencies
Ministry of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and monitoring the development of education • Supervising the operation of institutions • Monitoring the results of the realization of set goals and tasks of education at the state level • Maintaining international cooperation • Keeping a data base on education planning • Coordinating and organizing professional development for educational institution staff.
National Education Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the directions for the development and improvement of the quality of pre-school, elementary and secondary school education • Monitoring and analyzing the state of education and its harmonization with European standards • Reviewing and giving opinions on the procedure of adopting laws and other legal documents concerning education • Adopting the general bases for pre-school programs, as well as curricula and syllabi for elementary and secondary schools • Proposing textbooks and teaching materials to the Minister • Determining the list of educational profiles • Establishing the standards of: knowledge, professional development of teachers, the knowledge and skills of principals, the facilities, equipment and teaching materials.
Institute for the Improvement of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing pre-university education at all levels and types • Improving education adjusted to pupils with special abilities, persons with disabilities, persons suffering from systematic diseases, adults. Harmonizing the education system with European systems of education • Preparing the programs for final and graduation exams • Participation in the procedure of approving textbooks • Improving the system of continuous professional development. Monitoring the work of persons employed in institutions. Monitoring the professional development of persons employed in institutions • Developing, monitoring and ensuring the quality of vocational and

	art education
Institute for Education Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing general and specific standards of knowledge Monitoring and evaluating the degree of the realization of the goals, tasks, as well as general and specific standards of knowledge in pre-university education
Provincial Secretariat of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the established policy, regulations and other documents pertaining to the field of education Offering opinions on the procedure of adopting curricula and syllabi for elementary and secondary school education Granting approval for the implementation of the curricula and syllabi in languages of national minorities for a minimum of 15 pupils
Pedagogical Institute of Vojvodina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caring about education in the languages of national minorities on the territory of Vojvodina Organizing professional gatherings Harmonizing education in minority languages with European standards pertaining to this field
National Council for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the development of higher education and its harmonization with European and international standards Proposing the policy of higher education to the Ministry of Education
Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposing to the National Council standards for the issuing of operating licenses, accreditation of institutions of higher education, study programs, the self-evaluation and assessment of the quality of institutions of higher education Carrying out accreditation procedures Giving opinions on the procedure of issuing an operating license
Conference of Universities and Conference of Academies of Vocational Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing issues of joint interest for the promotion of the teaching-science/teaching-art activity at university/vocational studies Harmonizing different attitudes/positions and coordinating activities Offering opinions on standards for assessing the quality of work Proposing measures for the purpose of improving the financial position of universities/vocational studies and the students' standard
Socio-economic Council of the Republic of Serbia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing issues related to the development and improvement of collective bargaining, the employment and education policies, as well as professional training

3.1.4. Financing in the System of Education

The financing of the activities of educational institutions founded by the Republic, an autonomous province or a local self-government unit, is regulated by the Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System. Institutions can also provide their own income on the basis of donations, sponsorship, parents' participation, school fees, contracts and other operations in line with the law.

The Republic Budget provides the funds for: the realization of the preparatory pre-school program lasting four hours, the realization of the pre-school program for working with children with disabilities, the realization of the pre-school program for working with children undergoing hospital treatment, the salaries and allowances of persons employed in elementary and secondary schools and special contributions, the development programs and projects of the institutions, the professional development of educators on the basis of criteria determined by the Minister, student competitions on the Republic or higher level, the work of unique schools and schools of interest for the Republic, as well as for participation in investments.

The budget of a local self-government unit provides funds in the field of pre-school, elementary and secondary school education for: the realization of the activities of pre-school institutions, the professional development of employees, the construction and regular maintenance of facilities, the equipping of kindergartens and schools, the transport of employees, the transport of elementary school pupils who live more than four kilometers from school (and for children with disabilities regardless of the distance), transport of pupils to republic competitions, funds for the protection and security of children, and other current expenditures, except those for which the Republic Budget provides funds.

The income of the institution itself is used to improve the standard of education with regards to the space, equipment and teaching aids for the realization of program activities.

Financial allocations for Education in Serbia are presented in Table 8

Table 8. Consolidated Public Expenditures for Education – Functional Classification (in % of the GDP)⁸

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008
% GDP	3.5	3.8	3.8	4.0

Due to the change in the method of calculating the total GDP at the end of 2006, it has become more difficult to compare the percentages of the consolidated public expenditures for education in the total GDP for the purpose of drawing conclusions about the extent to which the policy of a considerable increase in the funds for education is being realized. The revised Memorandum on the Budget and the Economic and Fiscal Policy 2009, with Projections for 2010 and 2011, adopted in October 2008 envisages an allocation of 4% of the GDP for education every year in the period between 2008 and 2011, but in this respect

our country is still far from the 6% recommended by UNESCO which is the average share of public expenditures for education in OECD countries.

Additional sources from the *National Investment Plan(2006-2008)*:

The allocation of a total of 6.75 million EUR from the *NIP 2006* has been planned for education, this referring to computer equipment and Internet connections, the professional development of teachers and the improvement of working conditions in schools.

So far the Ministry of Education has spent a total of 0.44 million EUR from the NIP in 2006 and 2007 for the project “Professional Development of Teachers”. The funds have been used for the realization of the program of the professional development of teachers within various modules for the development of the professional competences of persons employed in education, with special emphasis on competences for working with children with special needs. A part of the funds was used for the engagement of assistants to support pupils of Roma nationality.

At NIP’s tender for 2008, a new Project was approved for the professional development of teachers in the amount of 56 million dinars. These funds will be used for the realization of 29 modules, out of which around 70 percent of the funds are planned for inclusive education and the development of the employees’ capacities for developing inclusive practices at schools.

Through cooperation among all the relevant parties at the national level, it is necessary to increase the level of allocations from the budget of the RS for education and to reach 6% of the GDP, with an increase in allocations for education programs.

3.1.5. Legislative Framework of the Educational System

The legislative framework of the educational system of the Republic of Serbia consists of the legal framework:

1. *The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*⁹
2. *Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System*¹⁰
3. *The Law on Elementary Schools*¹¹
4. *The Law on Secondary Schools*¹²
5. *The Law on Higher Education*¹³
6. *The Law on Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities*¹⁴
7. *The Law Establishing Particular Competencies of the Autonomous Province*¹⁵

⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 98/06,

¹⁰ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 62/03, 64/03 – correction, 58/04 and 62/04 - correction, 79/05 – other law and 101/05 – other law);

¹¹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 50/92, 53/93 – other law, 67 – other law, 48/94 – other law, 66/94- US, 22/02, 62/03 – other law, 64/03 - correction, 58/04, 62/04, 79/05 – other law and 101/05 – other law);

¹² Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 50/92, 53/93 – other law, 67/93 - other law, 48/94 - other law, 24/96, 23/02, 25/02 - correction, 62/03 - other law, 64/03 - other law and 101/05 - other law);

¹³ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia 76/05

¹⁴ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 43/84

8. *The Law on Textbooks and Teaching Aids*¹⁶

and of instruments that regulate issues of relevance for the education system: instruments provided by Government acts (decrees and decisions), the Minister of Education (regulations, professional instructions), the National Council for Education (decisions) which define in detail certain issues in the domain of education.

The provisions of international documents (declarations, conventions and charters) that have been signed and ratified by the Republic of Serbia, which are legally binding, are presently being prepared as laws and by-laws. They are the following:

- *The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*¹⁷
- *The Convention on the Rights of the Child*¹⁸
- *The Refugee Convention*¹⁹
- *The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by additional protocols*²⁰
- *The Charter on Human and Minority Rights and Civil Freedoms*²¹
- *The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*²²
- *The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*²³
- *The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women*²⁴
- *The Convention against Discrimination in Education*²⁵
- *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region*²⁶
- *The Bologna Declaration on the European Space for Higher Education*, 2003;
- *Education for All* - first program adopted in Jomtien (Thailand), 1990; second program adopted in Dakar (Senegal) 2002, as the program until 2015, entitled *The Dakar Framework Action*, which more clearly defines the goals of the Education for All program. Both programs were adopted by the state union of Serbia and Montenegro in a special statement.
- *The Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Serbia*, 2006.
- *The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, 2007.

¹⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 6/02

¹⁶ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, 29/93 and 62/06

¹⁷ Official Gazette of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, 7/71;

¹⁸ Official Gazette of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, br. 15/90, Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, 4/96, 2/97;

¹⁹ Official Gazette of the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, 7/60;

²⁰ Official Gazette of Serbia and Montenegro – International Treaties, 9/2003, 5/2005,

²¹ Official Gazette of Serbia and Montenegro, 6/2003)

²² Official Gazette of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, br. 6/98);

²³ Official Gazette of Serbia and Montenegro – International Treaties, 18/05);

²⁴ Official Gazette of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties, 11/81);

²⁵ Official Gazette of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia – International Treaties and Other Treaties, 4/64);

²⁶ Official Gazette of Serbia and Montenegro – International Treaties, 7/2003);

Compared to the report *Development of Education in the Republic of Serbia 2001-2004*, prepared for the 47th Session of the International Conference on Education, organized by UNESCO, 2004, the legislative framework has changed to the extent that the *Law on Higher Education* was adopted in 2005, and *The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia*, in 2006.

3.1.6. Rights and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the Education System

The legal framework of the education system of the Republic of Serbia provides certain possibilities and rights for various players in the field of education, primarily for children, pupils, students, pre-school institutions and schools and institutions of higher education, as presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Rights and Responsibilities in the Education System

<p>Concerning Children and Students in Primary and Secondary Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of education; • Possibility of receiving education under equal conditions even in economically insufficiently developed areas, as well as in socially, i.e. culturally less stimulating environments; • Quality education which ensures the mastering of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, artistic, cultural, health, ecological and computer literacy, necessary for life in a contemporary and complex society; education that corresponds to one's level of development and age; • Equal possibilities for the education of children and pupils with disabilities; • Prohibition of any kind of discrimination; • Stimulating pupils to acquire the highest level of education possible and to be included as much as possible in the process of life-long learning; • Maximal horizontal and vertical mobility within the system of education • Free education for pupils of elementary schools and regular pupils of secondary schools founded by the Republic of Serbia • The right to participate in decision making at school²⁷
<p>Concerning Students in Higher Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to higher education for all persons with previously acquired secondary education; exceptionally, under conditions established by the statute of an institution of higher education this right also belongs to a person who has not acquired secondary school education

²⁷ Participation in the work of the class and the Students' Parliament (for students of the 7th and 8th grade of elementary school and secondary school students)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The right to participate in decision-making²⁸
Concerning Pre-school Institutions and Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy of the institution: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The right to adopt a statute, syllabus, a development plan, an annual program for the work of the institution and rules of conduct at the institution; ○ Planning advanced training and the professional development of human resources; ○ Selecting employees and employee representatives for managing bodies and professional bodies; ○ Regulating the internal organization; ○ Cooperating with other organizations.
Concerning Institutions of Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic freedoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Freedom of scientific-research work and artistic creativity; ○ Freedom to choose the method of presenting the course content; ○ Freedom to choose a study program. • Autonomy of an institution of higher education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The right to determine: study programs, rules of studying, the conditions for enrolment and the internal organization; ○ The right to adopt a statute and elect administrative bodies and other bodies in line with the law; ○ The right to choose teachers and associates; ○ The right to issue public documents; ○ The right to dispose of funds and property in line with the law; ○ The right to decide on projects and on international cooperation. • Inviolability of the academic space

Apart from the above mentioned, the educational system is also characterized by the participation of representatives of parents and the local community in the decision-making process at pre-school institutions and schools, through the work of the parents' council and the administrative/school board.

²⁸ Students' Parliament

3.1.7. Strategic Developmental Framework for Education

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has also adopted multi-sector development strategies and action plans, as the basis for sector policies, which set the development directions in the related fields, including the domain of education. The most important strategic documents which address education are the following:

1. The Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003)
2. National Plan of Action for Children – NPA (2004)
3. National Millennium Development Goals (2006) and Report on the Realization of the MDG at the National Level in Serbia (2005)
4. Joint Action Plan Promoting Roma Education for the Decade of Roma Inclusion – JAP (2005)
5. Strategy of Adult Education Development of the Republic of Serbia (2006)
6. Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia 2007 - 2015 (2006)
7. Strategy of Vocational Education of the Republic of Serbia (2006)
8. National Strategy for an Information Society in Serbia (2006)
9. National Strategy for Sustainable Development (2008)
10. National Youth Strategy (2008)
11. National Strategy for the Accession of Serbia- Montenegro to the European Union (2005)
12. Action Plan for Implementation of EP Priorities (2007)
13. Second Report on PRS Implementation in Serbia (2007)
14. National Strategy for Employment 2005-2010 (2005)
15. National Action Plan for Employment 2006-2008 (2005)
16. National Strategy for Economic Development of RS 2006-2012 and Action Plan 2006
17. National Strategy for Regional Development (2007-2012) and Action Plan (2007)
18. National Strategy on Aging 2006-2015 (2006)

3.1.8. Key Challenges in Education

The development of education in Serbia has been marked by the following key challenges:

1. Stable growth of the investment rate in the field of education, salary growth and investment into restructuring and equipping school buildings. The GDP percentage allocated for education increased from 2.7% in 2001 to 3.7% in 2007. Furthermore, the stable employee salary growth of a 20-30% rate per annum has been evident as of 2002, with a multiple increase in 2000 and 2001. Investments into restructuring and equipping school buildings have also significantly increased²⁹, however, the budget of the Ministry of Education still indicates an excessively high share of wages at the expense of development programs, close to 90%. The need to increase the percentage of GDP allocated to education to 6% has generally been accepted and is indicated in a number of cross-sector strategic documents of Serbia.

2. Development of education policies and reform, with occasional standstills. In the period 2000-2008, two different stages in the education reform are visible:

*Changes in the period 2000-2004*³⁰. The beginning of changes was marked by the new education development strategy³¹ based on analyses and local consultations. The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System 2003 encompassed all the planned and initiated changes of pre-university education, with the implementation period ending 2011. New institutions for providing support for education development were established, professional standards for teachers were introduced (licensing, professional development and advancement), new regulation of curricula based on outcomes and standards (national curricular framework, school program) and the new system of quality assurance (external evaluation through completed exams, national and international testing and transforming the system of inspection into the system of school quality assurance). School development planning became mandatory, school autonomy was increased, the textbook publishing policy was liberalized and the introduction of mandatory pre-school education as of 2007 was announced. Reorganization of the network of secondary vocational schools harmonized with the requirements of the labor market was initiated (new education profiles were introduced and the establishment of mixed secondary schools with various profiles was allowed). This was the period of preparations for the future decentralization of the system. Effects of these changes were not fully realized, since the reforms were paced down after the year 2004.

Changes in the period 2004-2008. The adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2005 marked the beginning of the process of harmonization with the Bologna process. Universities introduced new curricula and decreased the length of studies from around 11 years in 2001 to, approximately, 7 in 2007. Secondary education continued with piloting new educational profiles and the Vocational Education Development Strategy was adopted in 2006. Experimental classes have been established in 146 vocational secondary schools,

²⁹ For example, the number of students per computer in secondary schools decreased from close to 1:100 at the beginning of 2000 to 1:18 in 2008.

³⁰ For more details see Kovač Cerović, T. et al. (2004): *Quality Education for all*, Belgrade: Ministry of Education and Sports, or *Quality Education for All, The Challenges of Education Reforms in Serbia* na www.see-educoop.net

³¹ T. Kovač Cerović. and Lj. Levkov (red): *Quality Education for All: Road to a Developed Society*, Ministry of Education and Sports, Belgrade, 2002

including 53 new education profiles in 13 different fields, with a new curriculum and a training for the teaching staff and procurement of school equipment. Some 18,000 students (6.5% secondary students) enrolled in training for new education profiles in 2007. A new information technology department in grammar schools has been opened, with two classes in 11 schools in Central Serbia. In cooperation with UNICEF, the project entitled School without Violence was launched in 2005, including 110 elementary schools (around 10%).

In spite of the changes thus far, the education system has still not lived up to **a number of vital challenges:**

- Low quality of education: Since 2002 the Republic of Serbia has been included in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) organized by OECD. The results of the 2003 and 2006 studies show that in all the areas tested (reading, mathematics and science) fifteen-year olds were in the low achievement zone (Table nr. 10). In comparison to the OECD average, the achievements of the students in Serbia were 60-70 points lower in mathematical and scientific literacy and almost 100 points in reading literacy (our pupils would need 1.5-2.5 years of schooling in OECD countries to compensate for this falling behind). In the period between 2003-2006, the quality of education dropped by 5 to 15 points, which equals 1-3 months of education (for example, the level of reading literacy dropped 11 points).

Table 10. Achievements of Students from the Republic of Serbia on PISA

AREA	RESULTS	RESULTS
	2003	2006
Natural Sciences	436	436
Mathematics	437	435
Reading Comprehension	411	401

- A low level of the inclusion of Roma children in the education system;
- The inclusion of children with disabilities in preschools and schools has not been systemically resolved;
- Insufficient attention for the needs of poor children in relation to education – it was only in 2008 that the first serious steps were made through the provision of scholarships from NIP funds for 1000 secondary school students;
- Underdeveloped system for acquiring literacy for adults, re-training and professional development (the Strategy for Adult Education was adopted in 2006, but it has not been implemented yet).

More specifically, and based on the recommendation of the developmental strategies of Serbia listed above, the key areas for improvement of the education system are the following³²:

³² Based on the analysis of the education policies the Poverty Reduction Strategy Focal Point integrated the goals, measures and recommendations of the strategic documents

1. Ensuring the Accessibility of Education/Increasing the Coverage of Children at All Education Levels

Measures/Activities:

- 1.1. Increasing the pre-school education coverage for all children, particularly children from marginalized/segregated groups
- 1.2. Ensuring universal inclusion in elementary education and in the mandatory pre-school preparatory program
- 1.3. Improving conditions for the education and development of underprivileged children (free transportation to school, free textbooks, affirmative action, scholarships, free additional help for studying, boarding school)
- 1.4. Ensuring continuity in advancement through the education system, increasing education attractiveness and reducing dropout rates at all education levels
- 1.5. Expanding the network of pre-school institutions
- 1.6. Functional optimization of the school network, while providing equal education access to all

2. Preventing Discrimination in Education

Measures/Activities:

- 2.1. Preventing all forms of segregation and discrimination in education at all education levels and increasing supervision in this area

3. Providing quality education for all children (including Roma, marginalized, underprivileged, and children with developmental disabilities)

Measures/Activities:

- 3.1 Ensuring inclusive education for all children (reviewing and abolishing procedures of segregating children to special institutions/classes, preparing schools, insuring individual approach to learning and motivating each child, and collaborating with parents)
- 3.2 Continuing the reform of education curricula and syllabi, with an emphasis on knowledge standards and educational results/outcomes, including computer literacy
- 3.3 Continuous monitoring of education achievements (PISA, TIMSS, national testing)
- 3.4 Ensuring modern, high quality and continuous professional development of educators for the sake of raising the quality of education for all children

4. Developing vocational education in accordance with the requirements of the economy

Measures/Activities:

- 4.1. Introducing an open and flexible system of vocational education which will provide broader vocational education and greater flexibility on the labor market
- 4.2. Developing programs, textbooks and teaching tools, introducing a vocational graduation exam and adequately regulating vocational internship
- 4.3. Expanding vocational education to informal education and linking it to work experience
- 4.4. Developing standardization in the domain of vocational education (vocation standards, educational standards, knowledge standards)
- 4.5. Creating career guidance and advisory centers

5. Acquiring professional titles, creating conditions for continuous learning and accessibility to higher education

Measures/Activities:

- 5.1. Establishing a system of continuous education (national and local institutions, standards, accreditations, certification of acquired knowledge, open system of acquiring qualification, financing) and including all population categories in the process of continuous education
- 5.2. Developing relevant programs for second chance education, functional literacy and for obtaining qualifications for youths and adults from marginalized groups; providing special support for the education of girls/women
- 5.3. Expanding adult education programs so that they include distance learning, mentor work, etc.

6. Developing higher education

Measures/Activities:

- 6.1. Increasing coverage and efficiency of higher education aimed at a faster inclusion of young professionals in the work process
- 6.2. Joining the European higher education space: stepping up work on the implementation of the Bologna process

7. Establishing a modern system of financing

Measures/Activities:

- 7.1. Increasing GDP allocations for education
- 7.2. Establishing a modern system of financing

8. Establishing a system of quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation

Measures/Activities:

8.1. Establishing a system for quality assurance at all levels of the education system

8.2. Improving the way education statistics are processed and updating the education system database.

The Republic of Serbia has yet to adopt strategic documents which would clearly define the manner in which social inclusion will be put into action, the manner in which it will be encouraged and in which its sustainability and quality will be assured as a strategic goal in the field of social development.

4. EDUCATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

4.1. Overall Review and Analysis of the Situation

According to the data gathered by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2003 there were in 142,720 children with registered developmental disorders, out of which 92,000 with mental disabilities, 30,000 with hearing impairments, 15,000 with sight impairments, 3,500 with cerebral palsy, 1,750 with muscular dystrophy and 1,200 with autism.

The legislation pertaining to the education system has defined *accessibility* of education, the possibility of acquiring education under *equal conditions*, education *harmonized with the degree of a person's development and age* and *the right to choose the language* as its basic principles.

The *Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System* (Article 46), explicitly prohibits physical violence and the insulting of children, pupils and employees, as well as discriminatory activities, i.e. the stimulation of such activities where, in preschools, schools and students' dormitories, groups and individuals are belittled or discriminated on the basis of their racial, national, linguistic, religious affiliation or gender, physical or psychological constitution, age, social and cultural origin, financial status, political orientation. The violation of the rights of children/students on the basis of discrimination is considered to be a serious violation of the work obligation, for which the measure of employment termination is prescribed, if the violation was performed intentionally. A fine for the institution is also prescribed.

Articles 18 and 19 of the *Law Preventing Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities* (2006), also define what counts as discrimination in education. Article 36 of this law prescribes the obligation of taking measures to ensure equality in the field of education, which bodies of the state administration, territorial autonomy and local self-government, responsible for the jobs of education, are obliged to carry out.

4.2. Education of Children/Students with Developmental Disabilities

Children with developmental disabilities are in Serbia predominantly educated in special schools. These schools are specialized for educating pupils with mental, physical and/or sensory disabilities and children are referred to the school based on the referral issued by a medical committee. The *Law on the Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities* regulates the classification of children with disabilities, as well as the modes of their education. On the basis of the *Decree on the Criteria for the Classification of Children with Developmental Disabilities*, and the *Composition and Manner of Operation of the Doctors' Commission for Examining Children with Disabilities*, the Commission (referred to hereinafter as CC – Commission for the Classification of Children with Disabilities), makes a decision on the type and degree of the disability. The opinion of the CC also contains a proposal regarding the curriculum and syllabus for the education of the child and the kind of treatment, training and protection that need to be provided for the child, which the parents can but are not obliged to accept.

In Serbia, there are 76 regionally organized Commissions of the first-degree and 4 Commissions of the second degree for the classification of children with disabilities.

The Law on the Primary School (Article 90) and the Law on the Education of Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities regulates the class or educational group size, which can have 10 pupils at the most, depending on the type and degree of the disability. A class of pupils with multiple disabilities and a combined class can have 6 pupils at the most.

On the territory of Serbia these schools are oriented towards large towns and have limited capacities, so that the reality is that the institutions which children with disabilities are referred to are not accessible to a large number of them. The largest number of schools for children with disabilities is in Belgrade and its vicinity (16). In 33 towns in Serbia, there are 51 schools for pupils with disabilities, some of them accompanied by boarding schools or boarding houses in order to cater children with disabilities from rural and/or remote areas. Hence, the Law on the Education of Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities, which is still in force, hinders inclusion in education. The Law stresses classification of children with respect of the type and degree of disability, which therefore leads to their segregation in education.

The education of children/pupils with disabilities, by levels, is performed in the following manner:

Pre-school Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Developmental groups include exclusively children with disabilities placed in the group of the decision of the CC. In pre-school institutions there are also developmental groups that include children without a decision of the CC. These children are there only on the basis of a decision made by preschool education staff that they cannot be included in a regular group. In the 2007/2008 academic year 432 children with developmental disabilities were included in developmental groups. In the 2007/2008 academic year the program of education activities for children with development disabilities of pre-school age organized at special schools for children with developmental disabilities included 136 children in 23 groups.

Hospital groups include children undergoing lengthy hospital treatment in institutions of the health care system. In the 2007/2008 year, the program of educational work with children undergoing hospital treatment included a total of 271 children within 37 developmental groups for children with disabilities.

Table 11. Pre-school Education of Children with Developmental Disabilities

Pre-school Institution	Number of Groups	Number of Children with Disabilities per Group
Developmental Groups	54	6 – 8
Hospital Groups	60	6

Primary Education for Pupils with Developmental Disabilities:

Special elementary schools for students with developmental disabilities educate only students, classified according to the same type of disability, up to a given level of disability, based on the decision of the Classification Commission. There is a slight decrease in the number of special schools.

Table 12. Special Elementary Schools for Pupils with Developmental Disabilities in Serbia³³ (data based on number of “mother schools”, i.e. the main institutions)

Special Elementary Schools	Number
for pupils with intellectual disabilities	36
for pupils with hearing impairments	8
for pupils with sight impairments	3
for pupils with behavioral disabilities	2
for pupils with physical disabilities	2
Total	51

Table 13. Data for Special Elementary Schools³⁴ (data based on number of facilities, i.e. the main institutions and its satellites)

		Schools	Classes	Pupils		Finished School	Teachers Total
				Total	Female Pupils		
Republic of Serbia							
	2005/06	245	1181	7,707	3,138	943	1,606
	2006/07	242	1155	7,393	2,998	880	1,652
Serbia Proper							
	2005/06	140	722	4,661	1,875	591	987
	2006/07	142	721	4,467	1,796	572	1,009
AP Vojvodina							
	2005/06	105	459	3,046	1,263	352	619
	2006/07	100	434	2,926	1,202	308	643

³³ Source: Ministry of Education

³⁴ Source: The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Statistical Yearbook RS 2007

The displayed number of special elementary schools is larger than the number displayed in the table n° 12 (source: the Ministry of Education), due to the fact that The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia during its statistical processing of number of schools includes, apart from mother schools, also separate school units in the field

In the school year 2007/2008 special classes in regular elementary schools (one or more classes for students with developmental disabilities) existed in 90 regular elementary schools.

Secondary Education for Students with Developmental Disabilities:

Secondary schools for students with developmental disabilities educate only students classified according to the same type of disability, up to a given level of disability, based on the decision of the Classification Commission.

Table 14. Special Secondary Schools for Students with Developmental Disabilities in Serbia³⁵ (data based on number of “mother schools”, i.e. the main institutions)

Special Secondary Schools	Number
for pupils with intellectual disabilities	22
for pupils with hearing impairments	4
for pupils with sight impairments	1
for pupils with behavioral disabilities	2
for pupils with anatomical disabilities	0
Total	29

Table 15. Special Secondary Schools for Students with Developmental Disabilities (data based on number of facilities, i.e. the main institutions and its satellites)

	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Schools	36	40	39	41	39	41	40
Classes	233	216	224	220	200	237	249
Students	1,269	1,361	1,360	1,338	1,186	1,465	1,550
Graduated	395	354	355	441	354	386	451
Teachers	...	568	599	594	637	630	731
Students per Teacher	...	2.4	2.3	2.3	1.9	2.3	2.1

Source: The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Statistical Yearbook RS 2007

The displayed number of special secondary schools is larger than the number displayed in the table n° 14 (source: the Ministry of Education), due to the fact that The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia during its

³⁵ Source: Ministry of Education

statistical processing of number of schools includes apart from mother schools, also separate school units in the field.

The data presented in the table on secondary schools for students with development disabilities shows a growth trend in the number of teachers in these institutions, which is disproportionate to the number of students that graduate from secondary schools. The reason should be sought in the concept of the system, which allows for employment to be based on the personnel needs of the institution for the realization of the existing curriculum and syllabi.

Eleven secondary schools have special classes for students with development disabilities (according to data from seven vocational schools, between 50 and 90 students with developmental disabilities are enrolled annually).

4.3. Education of Ethnic Minority Children/Pupils

Based on the Constitution and the law (*The Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System, Law on Primary Schools, Law on Secondary Schools, and Law Establishing Particular Competencies of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*) members of ethnic minorities have the right to education in their mother tongue. Education of members of ethnic minorities in their mother tongue is realized at all levels of education (in pre-school institutions, elementary and secondary schools, and at universities).

Students belonging to ethnic minority groups have the right to choose the language in which they will receive their education. The offered possibilities are:

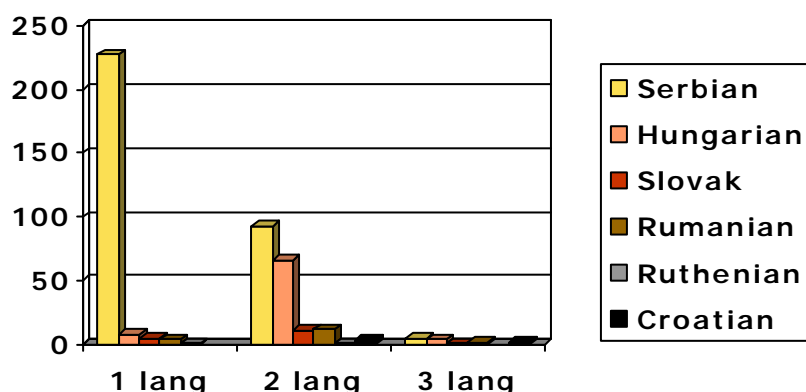
1. **Education in their native tongue** (carried out in the Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovakian and Croatian language);
2. **Bilingual education** (carried out in Bulgarian and Serbian language in Bosilegrad)
3. **Education in Serbian** with the possibility of the elective course *Mother Tongue with Elements of National Culture* (this elective course is carried out in the Bosnian, Bulgarian, Bačka-Croatian, Hungarian, Roma, Romanian, Ruthenian, Slovakian, Ukrainian and Croatian language).

Qualification exams are organized for students belonging to ethnic minority groups in their native language, and preparation exercises are translated into the languages of the ethnic minorities.

Table 16. Enrollment into Secondary Education in Minority Languages for the Academic Year 2008/09

Ethnic Minority	Number of Students Enrolled
Hungarian	1,674
Romanian	55
Ruthenian	10
Slovak	92
Albanian	960

Graph 1. Education Provided in Different Languages in Vojvodina: number of schools providing instruction in different languages



Instruction in elementary education is provided in 6 languages (data 2007)

Minority language instruction is mostly in bilingual schools

Optional language and culture courses are offered in 6 languages (Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian, Ruthenian, Croatian and Romany)

Being a European country with a significant percentage of Roma population, Serbia is actively involved in the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, which aims to help this greatly marginalized ethnic group in all aspects of life, so that it may exercise all the rights granted under the Constitution.

Through the committees on education of the national councils of the ethnic minorities, members of ethnic minorities are included in the process of developing the curriculum in subjects that are of ethnic importance (*native language, history, music and art history, and native language with elements of national culture*).

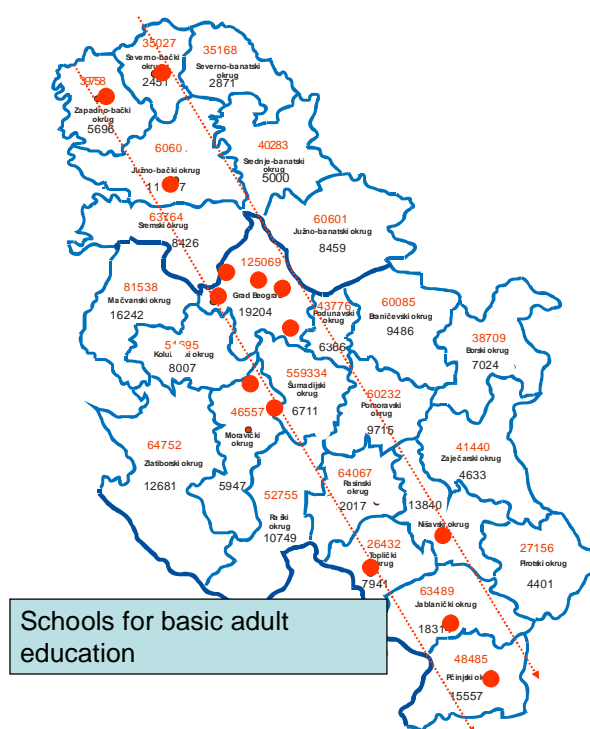
4.4. Adult Education – “Second Chance”

There are institutions and organizations in Serbia where formal and informal education and training for adults is carried out. There is no systemic monitoring or data collection for institutions responsible for these forms of education and training for adults, but several significant groups have emerged. In the formal education system, schools for elementary education of adults are one of the key players. Secondary vocational schools carry out retraining, additional training and expert training as required by the labor market. These activities are also carried out in secondary vocational schools where *regional centers for continual education of adults* have been founded (Niš, Belgrade, Kragujevac, Zrenjanin and Bor).

The institutions for informal education include: people’s, workers’ and open universities; the National Employment Service (NES); the Serbian Chamber of Commerce; professional associations; agencies; nongovernmental associations and civil society organizations; museums, libraries, reading rooms; institutions for social care of the elder, etc.

The regional distribution of schools for elementary education of adults, with the number of illiterate persons or persons without elementary school education, according to data from 2002 is presented below.

**Response to
the need for
basic adult
education
1 387 526
adult -
illiterate and
without basic
education;
72 831 age
15-29**



The “second chance” in secondary education, i.e. subsequent attainment of general secondary, vocational and professional education in the formal system is realized by adults as part-time students through exams and by means of self-financing. Secondary schools offer programs for additional qualification, retraining and specialization.

The EU Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) program, which includes the Vocational Education and Training Reform Program (VET), has provided support to the vocational education of adults in Serbia, aimed at their employment.

5. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

5.1. Strategic and Legislative Framework for Inclusive Education

The major act regulating education, Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System 2003 is based on the principle of accessibility of education, the quality of the conditions for education for all and on non-discrimination. However, the Law does not clearly define inclusion as a principle, instruments and measures that support the policy, practice and culture of inclusion.

The Law against Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities is the only legislative act in Serbia which explicitly addresses the right for education under equitable conditions for all children, irrespective of their physical, intellectual, religious, cultural, ethnic and other characteristics. This law, which defines the general means of prohibiting discrimination based on disability, especially cases of discrimination against persons with disabilities, the procedure of protecting persons exposed to discrimination, as well as the authorities in charge of preventing discrimination and taking measures for supporting equality of persons with disabilities, is significant for the development of inclusive education.

In the last 8 years two draft strategies for inclusive education have been developed by the Ministry of Education or its subsidiary institutions, one in 2002, and the other in 2006. However, none of these have been adopted.

Hence, it will be necessary to upgrade the legislative framework in order to further develop inclusive education in Serbia, as well as to unequivocally harmonize the principle of inclusive education with internationally ratified documents concerning the exercising of the right to education.

5.1.1. Social Inclusion and Pro-poor Education Policies

In 2003 the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the *Poverty Reduction Strategy* (PRS).

The PRS provides information on poverty profiles. The analysis of this information obtained by the Living Standards Measurement Survey (2002) - LSMS served to formulate the PRS goals. The LSMS was repeated in 2007, the changes in the poverty level were measured and series of data were identified over time. According to the LSMS data, poverty in Serbia was significantly reduced between 2002 and 2007. The number of the poor was reduced by half in 2007 in comparison with 2002 (Table 16). Thus the basic goal laid down by the Serbian Government in the *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, to reduce poverty by half before the year 2010, was achieved as early as 2007.³⁶

³⁶ Profile of Poverty in Serbia 2002-2007, Gorana Krstić, in *LSMS, Serbia 2002-2007*, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, The World Bank, Department for International Development, 2008 pg.10.

Table 17. Basic Poverty Indicators in Serbia, 2002-2007.
(standard errors given in parenthesis)

	2002	2007
Absolute poverty threshold per consumer unit, RSD	5,234	8,883
Percentage of the poor	14.0 (0.74)	6.6 (0.61)
Poverty depth %	3.0 (0.20)	1.3 (0.17)
Poverty severity %	1.0 (0.08)	0.4 (0.07)

Source: LSMS 2002 and 2007. Taken from the *Living Standards Measurement Survey*, 2008

A low and inadequate level of education has been identified as the main cause of poverty in Serbia. The Living Standards Measurement Survey 2007 showed that 71% of the poorest population have not completed elementary school or have only elementary school education (Table 18).

Table 18. Poverty According to the Education Level of the Head of the Household, 2002-2007.

	Percentage of the Poor			Structure of the Poor Population %			Structure of the Entire Population %		
	2002	2007	Difference	2002	2007	Difference	2002	2007	Difference
No education or incomplete elementary school	25.8	18.7	-7.1	34.1	40.8	6.7	18.6	14.4	-4.2
Elementary school	23.1	10.3	-12.7	32.6	30.5	-2.1	19.8	19.5	-0.3
Vocational or three-year secondary	13.6	4.4	-9.2	19.7	12.0	-7.7	20.3	18.0	-2.4
Secondary school	5.4	3.2	-2.1	10.1	15.0	4.9	26.5	30.7	4.2
College	6.1	0.7	-5.4	2.8	0.8	-2.0	6.4	7.2	0.8
University	1.3	0.6	-0.7	0.7	0.9	0.2	8.4	10.3	1.9
Overall	14.0	6.6	-7.4	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100	0.0

The education deficit is most prominent in the Roma population, and later becomes one of the causes of trans-generational transfer of poverty.

Different educational needs of the Roma population and adults with a low level of education are recognized in different strategic documents of the GoS.

5.2. Inclusion of Children with Disabilities, Disadvantages and Learning Difficulties into Regular Schools

5.2.1. Inclusion into Pre-school Education

The goals of pre-school education are aimed at encouraging physical, intellectual and socio-emotional development, communication and creativity among children, as well as gaining experience and developing knowledge of themselves, other people and the world, which is necessary for further education and inclusion in the social community.

However, access to preschool education is seriously hindered by lack of facilities, and their uneven distribution. Consequently preschool education includes to a lesser degree those children that need it the most: children from poor and rural regions, children from marginalized ethnic groups and children with developmental disabilities³⁷.

The overall percentage of children included in all forms of institutional pre-school education has increased recently somewhat (32% in 2002/03, 35.4% in 2007/08). Data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia shows that there is a low level of inclusion of children in institutional pre-school education: 8,345 educational groups included 178,389 children in 2007/08, i.e. 35.4% of the official number of children of the given age. Even though the number of enrolled children exceeded the capacities of the institutions by 6,492 children, 12,386 children remained not admitted.

Data shows that at the beginning of the academic year 2007/08, the preparatory pre-school program included 99.6% of the children on the territory of the Republic³⁸.

A large number of children is on waiting lists for admission to preschool. In 2005/08 the waiting lists included 10,595 children, and enrollment exceeded institution capacity by 5,422³⁹, and accordingly the need to expand the existing network should be appraised.

According to the 2007 Living Standards Measurement Survey, 38.1% of the children (39% of boys and 37% of girls) age 3-5 attend preschool. Preschool attendance is 83% for children aged 6-7 (81% of boys and 85% of girls). More than 96% attend state-run preschools⁴⁰.

According to the Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the PRS in Serbia "...based on preliminary results of the *Study of Multiple Indicators of the Position of Children and Women* (hereinafter MICS 3), which was carried out by UNICEF 2005⁴¹, at the

³⁷ UNESCO program the in Dakar Declaration, 2002.

³⁸ Coverage is calculated based on the established proportion of between the number of children born (as reported by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia) and the number of children enrolled in preschool education (as reported by the preschool institutions and school administrations). The presented percentage does not reflect the actual situation as there are no records for vulnerable groups.

³⁹ The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Announcement br. 59, 2006,

⁴⁰ Living Standards Measurement Survey – Serbia 2002–2007:105

⁴¹ MICS 3, 2005.

age of 36 to 59 months, pre-school education includes 45% of city children and only 14.4% of rural children, only 7.5% of children from families where parents have only elementary education, 7.0% of children from the poorest population, and only 3.9% of Roma from Roma settlements. A total of 88.6% of children (56.9% of Roma and 77% of the poorest) are included in some form of pre-school (all-day, half-day, or four-hour programs) one year before starting school.⁴²...” The information on the percentage of the overall coverage by the preparatory pre-school program is unreliable, but it is probably higher than 90%. The problem emerges due to the unequal coverage by region and due to the lack of data on sensitive/vulnerable groups.

A small number of preschools find alternative solutions at the local level (forming mobile preschool units, organizing transportation to the nearest preschool or utilizing other spatial capacities).

The Draft Law on Preschool Education, which should regulate the issue of the rights of children from vulnerable groups, specifies provisos on the mandatory preparatory pre-school program. The Draft also stipulates measures that create the possibility for increasing children coverage, particularly children from vulnerable groups, as well as measures that would contribute to the development of inclusiveness in pre-school education.

Preschool education is provided on the basis of the *Rulebook on the General Foundations of the Preschool Program*. Based on the Rulebook the preschools prepare their own syllabi. At the same time, this Rulebook regulates the *Preparatory Preschool Program* which is mandatory for children in the year preceding their entry into school. Therefore, children aged 5 and a half to 6 and a half are encompassed by the program. The *Preparatory Preschool Program* also contributes to programmatic and organizational linking between pre-school and elementary education, which is a prerequisite for continual education of children. Links between these two segments of the educational system facilitate the transference of children into a new environment. This is a common responsibility of pre-school and school teachers, of preschools and elementary schools.

The programmatic concept is the basis for developing an individual approach to each child and its needs, abilities, experiences, different study styles and rhythms, family backgrounds, etc. Preschool teachers create the program by adapting the range of educational methods and techniques to the actual group within the process of continual monitoring of children’s development. The principle of individualization is one of the cornerstones in the concept of pre-school education. However, despite the fact that individualization of the approach is inherent in the concept of pre-school education, the individual education program⁴³ – IEP is practiced rarely.

Law on the Fundamentals of the Education System laid down new elements in the process of the development and improvement of the quality of operation of pre-school institutions, such as cooperation with parents and the creation of development plans for

⁴² MICS 3

⁴³ IEP – Individual Education Program: Program created to suit preserved capacities of a child/pupil with disabilities/special needs. The program is based on activities adapted to age potentials and in accordance with the development of a child/pupil, aiming at accomplishing formulated educational objectives. IEP is created by a team comprised of institutional professionals, parents/guardians of a child/pupil with developmental disorders/special needs, external associates – involved on the basis of their qualifications to work with and care for children, volunteers, etc.

preschools. Consideration of the inclusive principle in supporting child development is highly valued in the process of evaluation and self-evaluation of the quality of the institution, as regulated by the Rulebook on Professional and Pedagogic Supervision.

5.2.2. Inclusion into Elementary Education

Elementary education is provided in elementary schools, elementary schools for adult education, elementary music and ballet schools, and elementary schools for educating students with developmental disabilities. Students of international schools, as well as six private elementary schools also provide system throughput.

The percentage of children that attend elementary schools is high. According to the 2007 pool, at the time that the study was conducted, 97.5% of the children of the relevant age attended elementary school, while 0.6% of children are still in schools for children with developmental disabilities. The greatest percentage of children that are not in the education system is still from Roma families (21.6%), poor families (11.8%, compared to the 1.6% average), and poorly educated families (4.4%). Compared to 2002, the number of children from rural regions not included in the education system has increased (1.5% in 2002 compared to 2.4% in 2007)⁴⁴. The analysis of the coverage of students in elementary schools indicates that there is a high dropout rate even in early schooling: around 5% on average (The Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2005), which is statistically significant as the analysis was performed on a representative sample of around 80,000 children. There is significantly greater dropout among children from vulnerable groups and from rural regions (81.82% enrolled, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2005). A recent study indicated that the number of Roma children completing elementary school is 72% lower than the number enrolled in the first grade, i.e. that their dropout rate is extremely high⁴⁵. The data indicate that only 30% of Roma children complete their elementary education, and that only 10% enroll in the next level of education.

The 2007 LSMS showed the following: “From families that are below the poverty line, 12% of children were not in the education system in 2007, while this percentage was 6% in 2002. Of the children included in the 2007 survey sample, 0.6% were included in elementary schools for children with developmental disabilities, mainly Roma, children from poor families and children from families with poor education. The percentage of boys was double the percentage of the girls. These schools were not attended by a single child (from the sample) from the category of children with disabilities, and the category of refugees and displaced persons”⁴⁶. The system, in the way that it is conceived, prevents as much as 85% of the children with disabilities to be included in the education process, which violates their right to education.

The curriculum for primary education has certain aspects which are supporting inclusive education. The educational process within a school is carried out on the basis of a document entitled “The School Program”. The School Program is a basic school document

⁴⁴ Living Standards Measurement Survey - Serbia 2002–2007:108

⁴⁵ Rights of the Child in Serbia, Center for the Rights of the Child and Save the Children, 2003. and 2004.

⁴⁶ Survey on the Standard of Living, ...pg 108

prepared and drawn up by all teachers and adopted by the Teachers' Council and the School Board. The basis for drawing up a school program is the prescribed Curriculum and Syllabus.

The School Program consists of compulsory, optional and facultative segments. Compulsory and optional segments of the school program include compulsory, compulsory-optional and optional teaching subjects and programs. The facultative segment of the school program is based on activities initiated by the school itself, in order to satisfy pupils' interests and needs, as well as those of the local community.

Religious Instruction/Civic Education was introduced in the year 2001 as a facultative subject; in the year 2004, it became a compulsory-optional teaching subject. Within the *Religious Instruction* classes, beliefs of seven religious communities and churches are taught: *Orthodox Catechism*; *Islamic Religious Knowledge (Ilmudin)*; *Catholic Religious Instructions*; *Evangelical – Lutheran Religious Instructions of the Slovak Evangelical Church of the A.C.*; *Religious Education of the Reformed Christian Church*; *Religious Instruction of the Evangelical Christian Church and Religious Knowledge of Judaism*. Programs of this teaching subject were proposed by the Commission for Religious Education of the Government of Serbia, while its realization is being monitored by the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education.

Civic Education conveys the knowledge and skills needed for active participation in society on the basis of democratic principles, respect of child and human rights, intercultural education and other. Program content within this subject is realized through teaching methods which encourage student participation, development of self-respect, positive communication, respect of diversity and tolerance. The methodology of this subject is particularly suitable for creating the conditions for an inclusive approach in the educational work. Teachers demonstrate a high level of motivation to apply methodical knowledge and skills gained from this subject in the realization of other teaching subjects.

Two foreign languages are compulsory for the pupils in Serbia. The first foreign language is taught from the first to the eighth grade and the second one from the fifth to the eighth grade. The following languages are taught within the Foreign Language program: English, Russian, German, French, Italian and Spanish.

The process of upgrading the curriculum is still under way. In 2006, the knowledge standards for the completion of compulsory education for ten teaching subjects were prepared. The process of their adoption by the National Education Council is underway.

5.2.3. Inclusion into Secondary Education

Secondary schools have the possibility of realizing a general, vocational or artistic education school program, and can realize special education programs for adult education, professional education, training and other programs in accordance with special laws. Secondary schools realize programs for retraining, additional training, specialization, professional education.

Other organizations and/or individuals may carry out special programs in education, provided that they meet the set standards for carrying out special programs and provided that they obtain approval from the appropriate state authorities. This is very important for the domain of elementary and professional education of adults, because this allows for the

delegation of elementary education of adults to other institutions after they have met the set standards. From the aspect of vocational education and schooling for adults this creates space for other organizations and individuals to carry out programs for professional education and training.

According to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia the participation rate in secondary education in the academic year 2005/06 was 78%, with a 2.3% dropout rate. There is no information on the number of children with developmental disabilities that are enrolled in any form of secondary education. Regular schools are not adapted to children with developmental disabilities (primarily the physical accessibility of schools). There are special schools (1-, 2- and 3-year schools), which train students for certain professions. Most profiles that are offered are inadequate, and the teaching staff needs to be adequately trained. As is the case with regular schools, there is a dropout trend in secondary schools for students with developmental disabilities also.

The percentage of the Roma population that enroll in secondary schools is still very low – in the academic year 2007/08 it was slightly higher than 0.6%. By comparison, in 2002 the Roma population accounted for 2.2% of the 15-year-old population, which is considered the relevant age group for secondary school enrollment. This is around 4 times more than the Roma percentage among candidates for enrolling in secondary schools in 2007/08. An even more explicit indicator of the Roma population stake in secondary education is the gross enrollment rate in the first year of secondary schools in 2006/07 and 2007/08, which is only around 10%, compared to the overall enrollment rate of 97%.

Table 19. ROMA PERCENTAGE AND GROSS SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATES ⁴⁷

	2002			2005/06		2006/07	
	Total	Roma		Total	Roma	Total	Roma
			%				
Population Age 15-18	393,888	8,075	2.1	368,903	7,563	360,264	7,386
Enrolled in Secondary Schools	310,235	1,058	0.3	293,711	1,002	290,387	990
Gross Enrollment Rate	78.8	13.1		79.6	13.2	80.6	13.4
Population Age 15	93,901	2,047	2.2	87,359	1,904	86,946	1,895
Enrolled in 1 st Grade of Secondary School	88,597	321	0.4	84,555	177	84,276	207
Gross Enrollment Rate	94.4	15.7		96.8	9.3	96.9	10.9

⁴⁷ The source of information on the population is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, i.e. for 2002 the Population Census, and population estimates were conducted midyear in 2005 and 2006.

The lightly shaded data represents the estimate of the Ministry of Education made on the basis of available data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

The source of data (not shaded) on enrollment in secondary schools is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. The source of data on Roma enrollment in the first grade of secondary schools (177 in 2006/07 and 207 in 2007/08) is the Ministry of Education.

Curriculum reforms in secondary education started in 2001. New education profiles⁴⁸ in vocational schools respond to the needs of the labor market, on one hand⁴⁹, and create conditions for diversification, on the other.

In the last 7 years experimental programs have been implemented in 173 secondary schools covering 7% of the secondary school population. In the school year 2007/2008, 17 new experimental education profiles have been introduced, within 7 working areas. Monitoring the development of experimental programs and evaluation of the processes and results of the experiment, within the secondary education, indicates a multitude of positive effects in the areas and schools in which they are being implemented.

5.2.4. Inclusion into Higher Education

Higher education institutions organize and implement studies in Serbian language; however the courses, certain parts of study programs, the preparation and defense of a doctoral dissertation may also be organized and implemented in the language of a national minority or in a foreign language. In the latter case, forms of official documents are printed bilingually.

Article 45 of the Law on Higher Education (hereinafter: the Law) recognizes the right to higher education to persons with disabilities. Furthermore, pursuant to the Article 46 of the Law, the founder of a higher education institution provides financial resources for the equipment and learning conditions for students with disabilities⁵⁰. Article 80 of the Law prescribes the carrying out of a study program in the language of a national minority or in a foreign language, if such a program has been accredited, as well as the possibility of organizing and carrying out studies for students with disabilities in sign language. Article 81 of the Law regulates the organization of studies by prescribing obligations of a higher education institution with respect to the manner of organization and the schedule of various forms of studies, regulated by the general act of the higher education institution, as well as providing the learning conditions for students with disabilities. Article 86 of the Law prescribes equal quality of learning conditions for all students, the right to diversity and protection against discrimination. Article 90 stipulates the possibility for students with disabilities to take exams in the manner adapted to their abilities.

Due to the autonomy of the University, faculties and higher education institutions within the faculties have regulated this matter in more detail through their statutes and general acts.

Excerpts from the Statutes of the Belgrade and Novi Sad Universities:

⁴⁸ CARDS, GTZ, ETF, projects: Contribution to Development of the Methodology of Curriculum Building enables development of professional competencies of teachers and associates in M.P.S. and V.E.T. centers. The experiment has been performed in 126 schools (2006/2007)

⁴⁹ The areas are: Agriculture and Food Processing; Health and Social Care; Machine Engineering and Metal Processing; Electrical Engineering; Geology; Mining and Metallurgy; Geodesy and Civil Engineering; Economy, Law and Administration; Chemistry, Non-metals and Graphic Design; Traffic; Forestry and Wood Processing; Textile and Leather Industry

⁵⁰ *Students with disabilities* is an official term in legislation (*The Law on Higher Education* – “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” No. 76/05)

The foregoing legal principles are emphasized in Article 88 of the Statute of the University of Belgrade. Fundamental principles defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia have been underlined in the Code of Professional Ethics of the Belgrade University. This Code was adopted by the Senate, on October 17, 2007. Canon 2 puts emphasis on equal opportunities for upgrading the knowledge, provided by teachers and assistants to all students. This should guarantee the possibilities for equal development.

Article 76 of the Statute of the Novi Sad University introduces the Board for Establishing Equality in the Teaching Process (comprised of 5 members, including one student with special needs). The Board lays down the standards which define the manner of achieving the equality of persons with special needs, monitors implementation of the standards and recommends measures aimed at improving the conditions in this field. Article 107 prescribes the obligation of higher education institutions to adapt the teaching process to the abilities and needs of students with temporary or permanent special needs.

With regard to access to higher education, and according to the Living Standards Measurement Study, there were 238,710 students and 12,884 teachers and assistants in Serbia, at the beginning of the winter semester 2006/2007. Over the last five years, the number of students has increased by 20%, the number of teachers by 18% and the number of institutions by as much as 50%.

In terms of various social and economic indicators, differences in participation in higher education are still evident, in the sense of a lesser participation of young people from the poorest families (14% compared to an average of 39%) and young people from the least educated families (19% compared to an average of 39%). Although the number of Roma students has increased in the last five years (0.06% compared to 0.03%) it is still exceedingly low.

Standards for self-evaluation and quality evaluation of higher education institutions give emphasis to the equality of all students, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin or social background, language, religion, political or any other opinion, background, existence of a sensory or motor disability, and financial status. Study opportunities for students with special needs are emphasized as well.

However, still only a low percentage of students with disabilities is noted at the universities in Serbia. Even though some faculties have taken steps to improve the physical accessibility of their facilities to students in wheelchairs, one of the reasons for the small number of students with disabilities can be found in unreachable facilities in terms of physical obstacles. Inaccessibility of studies for this category of students is also reflected in the learning conditions, i.e. the organization of curricula, the opportunity for purchasing textbooks in adapted formats, the opportunity for distance learning, etc.

5.3. Obstacles to the Development of Inclusive Education

Basic obstacles which complicate the introduction of inclusive education have been underlined in the publications of state bodies, which define inclusive policy as a decision in the development of sector areas. The educational system practice has identified the obstacles for inclusive education, ranging from the level of pre-school to secondary education:

- The network of preschools and schools is unevenly distributed geographically in such a way that most of the schools are concentrated in the major cities of Serbia while the rural children are most often isolated or accommodated in houses adjacent to schools.
- Physical inaccessibility of preschools and schools to children and pupils with disabilities often represents an obstacle to regular attendance of preschools or schools. This also applies to the interior organization of the facility, which represents an additional obstacle to a child/pupil or his/her parent/guardian for complete participation in the life of a preschool or school.
- Insufficient and inadequate equipment in preschools and schools is evident; the lack of functional didactic materials and teaching materials for quality preparation and carrying out of educational work in preschools and classes in schools.
- The overdeveloped network of special schools significantly decreases the chances of children with developmental disorders and discourages them from continuing their education. The special educational system for children/pupils with disabilities reduces their chances for university studies, despite the significant number of intellectually capable and gifted children amongst them.
- The lack of horizontal and vertical mobility between the regular and special educational system for children/pupils with developmental disorders prevents children from becoming integrated into mainstream education once they have been enrolled in the special education system.
- Biased negative views in the society on the potentials of children/pupils with disabilities, a high level of discrimination, prejudice and intolerance violate the human rights of these children/pupils. Negative attitudes and resistance to inclusion are prevalent not only among the parents of “ordinary” children, but also among a certain number of educational system employees.
- Although the systemic law prescribes the right of a child to receiving an education in the nearest educational institution, practice indicates a selective implementation of the right in case of children with developmental disabilities.
- Lack of adequate cooperation between educational institutions, social care institutions, health care (the continued existence of the Classification Commission), and local self-governments. Additionally, cooperation is lacking between educational institutions catering children of different ages, i.e. there is no system which would assure the continuity in providing adequate support for the children with disabilities..
- Curricula and working methods are not adapted to the education of children with developmental disorders

- Lack or delay in early stimulation and inclusion in preschool education, which is of crucial importance for the development of children.
- The practice of using aptitude tests for enrollment into elementary school. This practice__ favors children from urban areas and families with educational encouragement, and disfavor children from vulnerable groups.
- The system of regular education is not prepared for the education of children who need additional support, in respect of the facilities and in the organizational, staffing and programmatic sense.

Obstacles to inclusive education can be grouped on the basis of their causes. Causes can be found in: 1. Social-Psychological- barriers (opinions, prejudices and fears); 2. Physical barriers (surroundings not adapted to the needs of children/pupils with movement impediments); 3. Institutional barriers (complicated procedures, a rigid system, bureaucratic obstacles).

6. INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, PLACEMENT, WORKING CONDITIONS AND THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

6.1. Initial Teacher Education

The adoption of the Bologna Standards in higher education led to the introduction of new subjects and modules at the teacher and educator colleges in order to provide future teachers and educators with the knowledge and skills necessary for working with children/students with special needs (e.g. the subject *Methods of Working with Children with Special Needs* was introduced as mandatory to the curriculum and syllabus of the Teacher Education Faculty in Belgrade), along with the possibility of students *specializing in working with children with special needs* as part of facultative courses; in the 2004/2005 academic year the course *Methods of Social Work with Students with Minor Developmental Disabilities* was introduced to the first year of the Teacher Training College in Jagodina, University of Kragujevac, as a mandatory course, however, it was cancelled the next year and reintroduced to the third year of studies as the obligatory *Methods of Special Work with Children with Special Needs* course, etc.). Likewise, some subjects and content relating to inclusive education, were introduced as part of certain courses (e.g. the following subjects and content are being studied as part of the obligatory *Family Pedagogy* course: *Education of Children with Special Needs* and *Education of Children with Behaviour Disorders*; the following subjects and content are taught as part of the course *Education Methods in Mathematics: Methods of Working with Children Gifted in Mathematics*, etc.). Also, the Faculty of Philosophy, both in Novi Sad and in Belgrade is offering specialised courses for students of psychology or pedagogy at basic, master or doctoral level (e.g. Teaching and learning with children from vulnerable groups, doctoral course, university of Belgrade).

6.2. Professional Development of Teachers, Educators and Professional Services

Providers

The field of professional development, i.e. continuous professional education of teachers, educators and professional services providers is regulated by the Rulebook on Continuous Professional Development and Knowledge Acquisition for Teachers, Educators and Professional Services Providers ("Official Gazette of the RS", No. 14/2005 and No. 56/2005). Among other things, these rules provide for an obligation to complete at least 100 hours of public tender based professional education programs chosen from the annually published Catalogue of Programs approved (accredited) by the Institute for Education Improvement.

According to the records of the Institute for Education Improvement, the data on the accredited programs for 2006, 2007 and 2008 in the field of inclusive education show the following:

Total number of employees who completed accredited programs relating to children and students with special needs	3600
Total number of programs promoting inclusive education	11
Programs contributing to the understanding of the types of difficulties and recognizing difficulties in children	27
Programs aimed at increasing the sensitivity and enhancing the skills necessary for an individualized approach to working with children	34
Programs offering training for establishing individual support plans	3

The numerical data clearly indicate an insufficient number of professional education programs aimed at gaining knowledge and skills for work with students with developmental disabilities.

However, an overview of the Catalogue of Programs of Professional Development for Educators for the 2008/2009, 2007/2008 and 2006/2007 school years, shows that there is a quantitative increase in the number of accredited training programs for educators in the field of working with children with special needs⁵¹.

All three of the Catalogues mentioned contain a separate section for *Education of Children with Special Needs*, as well as a *National Minorities* section. Training for working with gifted children, students and training for the professional empowerment of teachers working in small schools and combined classes are not separated, even though their quantitative increase is noticeable⁵².

Starting in 2001, the Ministry of Education (and Sports), has organized specific awareness raising seminars pertaining to the needs of children with special needs and the development of an inclusive approach to education:

- In 2003, *Education of Children with Special Needs and the New School – Quality Education for All*; 195 participants from all over Serbia participated – headmasters, teachers, educators, professional associates in pre-school, elementary and secondary schools, along with representatives of 12 school managements, parent associations and local communities;
- In 2004, four *Education of Children with Special Needs – Quality Education for All* seminars were held; these seminars saw over 400 participants from pre-school institutions, elementary and secondary schools from the special and regular

⁵¹ There were 10 training programs in the Catalogue of Professional Education for Employees in Education for the 2006/2007 school year in the Education of Children with Special Needs section, while the National Minorities section held only three training programs where employees in education could take part. There were 15 training programs in the Catalogue of Professional Education for Employees in Education for the 2007/2008 school year in the Education of Children with Special Needs the following year, while the number of programs has doubled in the National Minorities section. The current Catalogue of Professional Education Programs contains 23 training programs offered in the Education of Children with Special Needs section, while the National Minorities section offers 13 training programs.

⁵² The 2006/2007 Catalogue of Programs did not contain teacher training programs for working with gifted students. The following year two teacher training programs for working with children gifted in mathematics were offered. The current Catalogue offers 6 teacher training programs for working with children gifted in mathematics, while there are still no such training programs in other areas.

education system, representatives of parents associations of children with special needs and disabled persons organizations representatives along with the local community representatives;

- In 2005, nineteen *Children with Special Needs in Primary School* seminars were held (in 16 towns in Serbia with a total of 523 participants), initiated by the Teachers Association of Serbia based on the priority needs of homeroom teachers, with the financial support of the Ministry of Education and Sports;
- In the period between 2005 and 2008, thirty seven two-day/one-day *Children with Special Needs in Preschools and School* seminars were held at the initiative of pre-school institutions and elementary schools, the Association of Educators of Belgrade, the Provincial Secretariat for Education and Culture of Vojvodina, as well as a part of different NGO projects, with over 1,100 educators, homeroom teachers and subject teachers and other educators taking part.

In the period from 2004 to 2008, various program contents, including seminars in the *Education of Children with Special Needs and the New School – Quality Education for All – Educational and Social Inclusion* cycle, supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports and/or other bodies from state authorities and/or at the initiative of professional associations, PSI/PS/NGO, covered more than 2,200 employees in education.

7. GOALS AND MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF CURRENT AND FUTURE REFORMS

7.1. Education Policy Long-term Priorities

The characteristics of current and future reforms in the development of inclusive society are based on the strategic development framework of the Republic of Serbia, comprising a set of documents adopted by the Government. The documents in the field of education set forth clear requirements, based on which the following three priorities are established:

1. Equity and education justice,
2. Quality and competitiveness within the European framework
3. Efficiency of the education system

1. Equity and Education Justice

The priority is directly linked to the issue of education coverage and drop-out, which refers in particular to children with developmental disabilities and children from rural and impoverished regions. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that every person in Serbia receives an education and obtains qualifications necessary to join the labor market, which may be ensured by the following measures:

- Pre-school institutions capacity building and full coverage of all children with the help of local-level capacities, with particular emphasis on disadvantaged children
- Ensuring adequate additional education for all children without sufficient family based education related support, in order to prevent high drop-out rate or grade repetition
- Ensuring social support (free-of-charge textbooks, subsidized meals, scholarships, mentors, etc.)
- Enabling horizontal mobility of the secondary education system and establishing a modern system of education of adults who are without qualifications.

The measures mentioned may be grouped into following groups: one-off investment measures, cross-sector systemic measures for regulating social safety and support and measures within the education system.

2. Quality and Competitiveness within the European Framework

The reforms initiated in the period 2001-2004 (see *Quality Education for All – Education Challenges in Serbia*, which sum up the changes achieved until 2004), as well as the developmental strategic framework of Serbia, provide solid ground to raise the education quality and its competitiveness in our country.

In the immediate future it is necessary to carry out an estimate of the following: situation in all fields (programs, textbooks, teacher competence, quality assurance mechanisms, school management modes, as well as financing), possible setbacks and barriers

in the future development of education, as well as finding strategic solutions to overcome them.

3. Efficiency of the Education System

The efficiency of the education system is conditioned by the manner of financing, which calls for an internal analysis in order to come up with a model of internal saving and transferring resources for ensuring the quality and equity of the system. In the forthcoming period, it will be important to find strategic solutions for neutralizing the identified indicators of inefficiency. This refers to the existing network of schools, the number of employees working in the institutions, parental co-financing of their children's learning activities.

7. 2. Systemic Measures for the Development of Inclusive Education

Based on all the Serbian education policy documents and analyses, the following actions are needed in order to create a more favourable policy environment for inclusive education.

➤ **Preparation and training of staff to include all children/students into the mainstream education system** (changes in the basic education of teaching staff)

In order to prepare and train professionals to include all children/students into the mainstream education system, it is necessary to improve and enrich the curricula of the teacher education faculties

➤ **Harmonization of current legislation and adoption of new education-related regulations**

The new legislation should regulate more specifically the already enacted legislative fundamentals and harmonize them with European education standards of high-quality education for all, as well as with strategic development trends in all areas of education. The adopted strategic documents, action plans and existing legislation will pave the way for the forthcoming legislative changes.

➤ **Normative regulation of development and implementation of individual educational programs (IEP) and evaluation of child/student achievements**

The normative regulation of IEP and professional development of teachers to develop individual programs should provide them an important component of inclusive approach, motivating a child/student to work and develop its potentials and motivating the parents to become team players and partners thus participating in the creation of programs and monitoring their implementation.

➤ **Remodelling facilities to fit the needs of all beneficiaries of an education institution**

➤ **Cooperation with the local government which should dispose of sufficient budget funds in their financial plans and programs for financing the previously detected needs of education institutions on their territory**

A low level of expenditures on account of education has adverse impact on accessibility to education for children from the poorest regions, non-mandatory levels of education (after elementary school) and the quality of education. The municipalities with the below average GDP rate are not able to provide for the law-stipulated

mandatory resources on account of education. Although a first step has been made towards the democratization of the education system (School Board), it is necessary to undertake measures targeting further strengthening of capacities of these bodies by giving more authority to parents and teachers in the decision-making process...”⁵³

⁵³ PRS, 2003:133

8. ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The previous period of ten years in the Republic of Serbia provided increased and intensified efforts in the area of promoting and developing inclusive education. A number of towns have significantly developed inclusive practice in their local pre-school institutions and schools. Alternative forms of support have been also developed targeting children, parents, teachers while architectonic barriers are being eliminated or overcome.

A number of implemented activities and measures have been supported by the Ministry of Education and other national and local authorities mostly within donor projects and programs.

8.1. Inclusive project and program activities of the institutions

8.1.1. Implemented activities in the system of pre-school education

Professional development of teachers is very significant within the area of institutional pre-school education. Programs such as “Boosting Child’s Self-Esteem”, “Primer on Child Rights”, “Guardians of Smiles”, “Giraffe Language – Non-violent Communication”, “Parents and Teachers in Action” implemented since the 90s of the twentieth century have had positive impact on the changes in attitudes and working methodology of education experts. Acquired knowledge and skills have enhanced the quality of education-related work and respect for children’s rights. Novelties have been introduced into program solutions and methodology of work with children and parents. There was an exchange of knowledge and experience, in particular at the local community level. New methodical and program solutions were promoted, in particular in the field of strengthening inclusive practices in pre-school institutions and joint competence building of staff from NGOs and pre-school institutions aimed at working with children from marginalized groups of population.

Save the Children: Project
of Inclusive Education in
Serbia

By implementing the Project of Inclusive Education in Serbia, Save the Children supported a one-year staff training and support program during the implementation of the project from 2000 to 2002 (PI “Our Joy” of Subotica). The project was developed by involving pre-school institutions of Novi Pazar and Kula in the course of 2003 and 2004. The total of 400 children were covered by the project. The publication entitled “Child-friendly Day Care” on the application of the inclusive working model in pre-school institutions.

The NGO Initiative for Inclusion “VelikiMali” and PI “Child Joy” of Pančevo: Project entitled integrative pre-school facility “Swallow”

The NGO Initiative for Inclusion “VelikiMali” in cooperation with PI “Child Joy” of Pančevo have developed and implemented the Program of Pre-school Education of Children with Disabilities. The program is implemented in all the branches of the PI “Child Joy” (20) and targets children with disabilities. Currently, the program supports the development and education of 35 children with disabilities aged 3 to 7. Support for children with disabilities with the aim of effective inclusion in pre-school groups has become the teamwork achievement of decision makers, teachers and professionals from pre-school institution and professionals from the organization “VelikiMali”. A grant has been obtained for the reconstruction and adaptation of the day care building, which has become the Integrative Pre-school facility “Swallow”, according to the Contract on Cooperation with PI. The “Swallow” has been operational since the 2005 school year and has been implementing a part of the support program for education of children with disabilities, with the status of a development-transitory group. Support provided within the integrative pre-school facility aims at including children into regular day care groups and/or day care centres closest to the children’s place of residence.

With an aim of achieving a higher inclusion of Roma children aged five to seven, the Ministry of Education has, in cooperation with the National Council for Roma Ethnic Minority and with financial support provided by the Roma Educational Fund (REF), supported pre-school institutions by small grants aimed at implementing inclusive projects targeting Roma children in 24 municipalities in the Republic of Serbia. The project included 600 children.

PI “Čika Jova Zmaj” of Pirot, with support of the local community: Example of work of PI in line with inclusive principles

There are no development groups in the PI. Nine children with disabilities were involved in the regular groups. Pre-school who worked with the children have been trained to work with children with disabilities (Integration of Children with Disabilities – Program “All Together”; Boosting the Child’s Self-Esteem – ME, “Creative Work of Children, Parents and Teachers in the Hospital Group”).

The specific methodology of working with the children in the PI “Čika Jova Zmaj” is determined depending on the age of the child, type and level of disability. Teachers and professionals develop curricula in cooperation with the parents and in line with the needs of the children.

Representatives of the PI „Čika Jova Zmaj“, together with participants of expert teams from other relevant institutions took part in the development of the leaflet entitled “Children with Developmental Disabilities in Pirot” (How to provide support and stimulate development). The leaflet contains recommendations on how to recognize the risk factors in the child’s development, names and contact info of services for children with disabilities and their families in Pirot. This leaflet is intended primarily for the parents of children with disabilities, as well as for other parents, experts dealing with social welfare and healthcare and education of children, and representatives of local level authorities.

Within the project entitled “Mitigating the Impact of Poverty on Children with Disabilities in Serbia”, the participants attended the following: I Disability issues awareness raising seminar, II Creating a database of children with special needs, III Counselling for parents of children with disabilities and children with chronic diseases, IV Framework for assessing the needs, direction and monitoring of children with disabilities in the local community (organized by Save the Children).

A number of children with developmental disabilities were enrolled into regular groups. A number of teachers developed inclusive approach and competences necessary for developing individual educational programs through various forms of professional development.

National Council of Roma Ethnic Minority and the Ministry of Education: *Increased Access to Pre-school Education for Roma Children*

The National Council of Roma Ethnic Minority and the Ministry of Education, with the help of Roma Educational Fund of Budapest, implemented the project entitled *Increased Access to Pre-school Education for Roma Children*. On the territory of the Republic of Serbia, 24 pre-school institutions included 20 to 24 Roma children each, divided them into educational groups, so that the total number of children in a group did not exceed 40%. The project also included activities relating to the enrolment of children into elementary schools upon the completion of the preparatory pre-school program.

The “Expanding Access to
Preschool Education for
Roma Children” project

The inclusion of pre-school institutions in the “Expanding Access to Preschool Education for Roma Children” project provided positive results. All the children taking part in the preparatory pre-school program within the Smederevo institution have been enrolled in first grade of the 2007/2008 school year. Pre-school education included 165 children of Roma nationality, 42 children with developmental disabilities, 5 children from socially and economically vulnerable families and 4 refugee and internally displaced children from the entire territory of the school district of Požarevac.

Free accommodation within the institution, along with snacks, insurance, materials, etc. have been provided in certain institutions in cooperation with the founders.

“Our Joy” PSI, Smederevo:
inclusion of children with
developmental disabilities
into regular groups

At the “Our Joy” PSI from Smederevo, children with developmental disabilities have been included into regular groups. A total of 15 children have been divided in 15 groups in all of the institution’s facilities. Educators have attended seminars in cooperation with the *Institute for Psychophysiological Disorders and Speech Pathology* in Belgrade and seminars of the expert team of “Our Joy” PSI from Subotica.

The institutions established cooperation with Roma associations, centres for social work, community health centres and non-governmental organizations working with marginalized groups in order to increase the number of included children from vulnerable groups.

Open Society Fund: “Inclusive
Education, from Practice to
Policy” project

The cooperation between the civil sector and the individual institutions, schools and pre-school institutions on empowering human resources in the educational system thus enabling them to undertake affirmative measures of including children/students from marginalized groups into the regular educational system was implemented through the “Inclusive Education, from Practice to Policy” project. This project was

implemented with the involvement of a large number of NGOs, with over 30 pre-school institutions and elementary schools from more than 10 towns in Serbia taking part in certain phases of the project. The *Service for the Support of Inclusive Education* was established, employing 30 professionals and practitioners. The project resulted in the publication of the *Guide for Improving Inclusive Educational Practices*. The publication was the result of national practices. It is intended for practice, educational institutions and the local community. Educators, teachers and professional service providers from all over Serbia took part in the collection of examples of inclusive educational practices. The List of Criteria and Indicators of Good Inclusive Educational Practices was defined based on the analysis of over three hundred selected examples of good inclusive practices.

8.1.2. Implemented Activities in the System of Primary Education

A number of regular elementary school, in cooperation with local partners and the civil sector, have been developing good inclusive practices. Although there is no registry of project activities implemented in education institutions, the Ministry of Education provides support to school projects enhancing the quality of education, in particular projects promoting inclusive education. An example of support provided by the Ministry of Education is the project by Save the Children - Child-friendly School, implemented in elementary schools of Belgrade and Serbia.

The Ministry of Education and Sports, UNICEF and Save the Children: “Child-friendly School”

The project was implemented in 2003-2006 and was based on the results of survey on the views of teachers, parents and children regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular schools. The survey was conducted in schools in Belgrade, Subotica and Niš. The project was implemented by the Psychology Institute of the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade, in partnership with Save the Children. The project involved 672 children.

Save the Children: teacher training at the pre-school and elementary school level

The education program developed by Save the Children targeting teachers contains four modules.⁵⁴ The Child-friendly School project included seminars for teachers and professionals working in pre-school institutions, parents, medical workers and professionals from development councils. The training included 273 participants. The total of 57 seminars was conducted during 2006-2008 with the support of the Ministry of Education, training 1,196 experts to work according to the inclusive model. During the project entitled “Inclusive Education and Anti-discrimination in the West Balkans – Equal Opportunities for the Roma Children”, 101 participants attended the training against prejudices, training for implementing the Inclusion Index and training for the development of the inclusive education strategy.

Open Society Fund: Service for Providing Support for Inclusive Education and Guidelines for Enhancing Good Inclusive Practices

The project has enabled the establishment of the Service for Providing Support for Inclusive Education by phone and on the spot, providing support to teachers, parents and all the interested individuals to exercise the right to education for all children. Services cooperate through an exchange of experiences and mutual support. The engagement of the Service for Providing Support for Inclusive Education was often initiated by parents, who mediated between the Service, teachers and tutors with an aim to obtain the optimum

⁵⁴ 1. Introductory seminar on inclusion – theoretical and methodological concept of inclusion; types of activities, potential roles within the inclusive program; fears of teachers and parents and potential ways to overcome them; meeting the needs of all children in the group; national experiences; international perspective
 2. Characteristics of specific disabilities in children of pre-school age
 3. Portage training – Portage model and principles; Portage material; assessment of the development status of children based on the Portage check list; development of individual stimulation plans, development of activity graphs; Portage model implemented in case of group work; documentation and evaluation
 4. Programming activities in an inclusive pre-school institution – planning group work in the function of individualized approach; individual and group work; supervision and monitoring of children; teacher – child – parent communication; working with parents

education for their children. The Service was approached by a number of teachers and other professionals – in addition to 203 teachers and 136 professional service providers, the Service was also approached by 74 subject teachers. By means of telephone consultations and 328 meetings of the Service with groups of professionals, directors, teachers' councils, local teachers' societies, hundreds of interventions were carried out (providing information, giving advisory and expert support, developing positive views of inclusive education), most of which were in the form of providing support to direct work with children with developmental disabilities – 328.

8.1.3. Implemented Activities in the System of Vocational Education

Curricula for vocational education of students with developmental disabilities offer a limited number of educational profiles and are outdated, technologically obsolete and are not harmonized with the labour market requirements. The adopted Vocational Education Development Strategy envisages professional development and innovation of curricula for students with special needs as of 2009.

The adult education schools conduct classes according to the curricula from 1991. As of 2006, a number of adult education schools conduct a pilot program entitled “Functional Primary Education of Adult Roma” and supported by the Roma Education Fund, which adequately integrates elementary and vocational education, helping attendees find jobs. The curriculum closely linked the seventh and eighth grade of elementary school education and completion of one of the 15 offered vocational programs.

Experimental programs in vocational schools are implemented in 173 secondary schools and cover 7% of secondary school population. The school year 2007/08 introduced 17 new experimental educational profiles in seven areas of work. Monitoring of the development of experimental programs and evaluation of the process as well as the results of the secondary school experimental programs indicate a series of positive effects in the respective environment and schools, in particular from the aspect of fight against poverty.

9. DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION

9.1. Education of Roma⁵⁵

Low education attainment is most prominent among the Roma population, and later becomes one of the causes of trans-generational transfer of poverty. According the 2002 Census data, 61.9% of the Roma have not completed elementary school, 29% have completed elementary school, 7.8% have secondary education, and only 0.3% have a college or university degree.⁵⁶

There is a significant difference between duration of education of Roma and duration of education of the population in general.⁵⁷

Table 20. Education attainment of Roma, according to Census 1991, Census 2002 and LSMS 2007⁵⁸

level of education/years of schooling***	% of total* population of Roma older than 15		
	Census 1991	Census 2002	LSMS 2007**
less than 4 years of schooling	34.8	32	32.1
less than 8 years of schooling	78.7 ****	63****	58.1****
completed primary education	17	29	31.1
completed secondary education	4	7.8	10.8
completed post-secondary or higher education	0.3	0.3	0

⁵⁵ Source: Policy Impact Assessment – Education of vulnerable groups, Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point, Vukasović and Jarić, draft material, 2008

⁵⁶ The Roma unemployment rate is more than 60% (NGO study), excessive representation in professions requiring no skills (around 90% of employed Roma work as unskilled workers) and a 50% stake in the entire number of social security beneficiaries (Family Financial Assistance and other assistance). The largest portion of Family Financial Assistance beneficiaries are without elementary school and without a profession.

⁵⁷ Source: Policy Impact Assessment – Education of vulnerable groups, Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point, Vukasović and Jarić, draft material, 2008

⁵⁸ Source: Policy Impact Assessment – Education of vulnerable groups, Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point, Vukasović and Jarić, draft material, 2008. Data are not reliable because Census data do not cover entire Roma population and LSMS data cover only integrated Roma, but not those living in Roma settlements.

“The data from Census 2002 and from Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS 2007)⁵⁸ provide some groups for comparison of the Roma situation in the period of more than 15 years. Table 6 presents such comparison, although a number of reservations need to be made:

1. (*) According to the Census 2002, there were 108.000 Roma, but estimated number is approximately 500.000.
2. (**) LSMS 2007 is even less reliable in terms of Roma, primarily due to the methodology of data collection – data were gathered only from “integrated” Roma, but not those living in slums and Roma settlements.
3. (***) Classification of education levels or years of schooling is different for Census 1991 and 2002, compared to LSMS 2007 (LSMS used categories such as “no school”, “incomplete primary” and “primary”, while censuses used years of schooling, which is the reason why some data were combined.
4. (****) The remarks under point 3 are the reason why data marked as “less than 8 years of schooling” are essentially inclusive of the % under “less than 4 years of schooling”

See: Jarić, Vukasović, PIA Vulnerable groups, 2008.

Newer data show that the differences remain and that they increase with the increase of the education level. LSMS 2007 did not even register any individual of Roma origin with higher education degree. Some studies (Vukasović, 2007) also show insignificant proportion of Roma students with higher education.

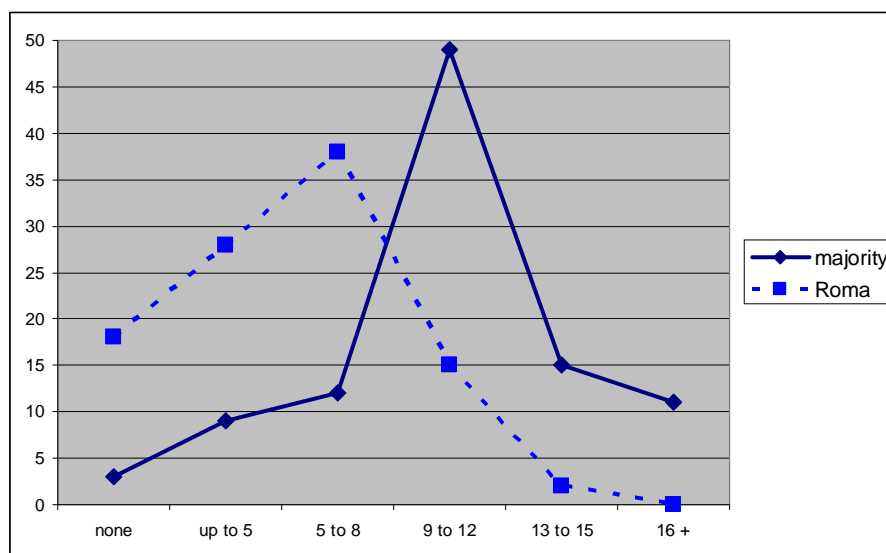


Figure 1. Duration of schooling of the majority population (living in close proximity of Roma settlements) and of Roma in 2005. Adapted from: UNDP, 2006

Figure 1 presents duration of schooling for the majority population living in close proximity of Roma settlements (to ensure increased comparability of living standards) and the majority of the population. The data about duration of schooling are illustrative of the situation in 2005.⁵⁹

In the past five years the elementary school coverage of children from Roma families has increased (LSMS, 2008, 56% in 2002, compared to 73% in 2007) and the percentage of these children in schools with development disabilities has been reduced (8% in 2002 compared to 6% in 2007). These small shifts are undoubtedly the result of a number of special measures and affirmative actions that have been carried out with the aim of including Roma children in the education system.⁶⁰

9.2. Systemic Measures and Activities in the Decade of Roma

The Republic of Serbia, together with Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, participates in the international program “Decade of Roma Inclusion”, from 2005 to 2015, with an aim of improving the status of the Roma population. Therefore, since 2003, the Republic of Serbia, in cooperation

⁵⁹ Ibid, 2008.

⁶⁰ Education, Snežana Klačnjina in *Survey on Living Standard*, Serbia 2002-2007, Republic Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, The World Bank, Department for International Development, 2008 pg.108.

with governmental and non-governmental organizations, has implemented many activities aimed at improving the situation of Roma in Serbia. These are as follows:

- The National Council of Roma Ethnic Minority has been formed.
- The Secretariat for Roma National Strategy within the Agency for Human and Minority Rights has been established.
- The Office for Roma Inclusion of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina has been established.
- Local action plans on implementation of Roma Inclusion Strategy have been adopted in eighteen municipalities.
- The *Action Plan for the Education of Roma*, has been developed and adopted by the Government on January 27 2005
- The Council for the Advancement of Roma and Implementation of Decade of Roma Inclusion, under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, has been formed.
- Over a thousand of Roma NGOs have been established.
- Over a hundred projects, supported by the Republic of Serbia, have been prepared and implemented.

On June 24, 2008, at the 13th session of the International Steering Committee on the *Decade of Roma*, Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Božidar Đelić, on behalf of our country, has taken over the Decade Presidency from Hungary. This fact will have further positive effect on the improvement of the status of Roma in Serbia.

9.2.1. Program and Project Activities and Results in the Field of Education

In cooperation with other institutions in the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of Education has been involved in the implementation of the *Decade*, as the coordinator of measures envisaged by the *Action Plan for the Education of Roma*. In cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, the Ministry of Education has implemented so far the following activities:

- Roma students enrolment into secondary schools and universities, by implementing affirmative action measures (with the National Council of the Roma National Minority)
- Functional basic education of Roma (with the Roma Education Fund)
- Establishing of Roma intellectual elite at University of Novi Sad (with the Roma Education Fund)
- Protection of Roma children against discrimination in education (with the Roma Education Fund)

- Expansion of Roma children access to preschool education (with the Roma Education Fund)
- Finding systemic solutions pertaining to the Roma history, tradition and culture within the framework of educational institutions
- Roma children as internally displaced persons/repatriates: from language barriers to social capital (with the Roma Education Fund and the Council of Europe).
- Inclusion of Roma children into secondary schools in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (with the Roma Education Fund)
- Creating conditions for extension of access and better school performance of Roma children
- Roma Education - solutions for the future: involvement of Roma parents in school boards. (with the Roma Education Fund)

The Ministry of Education has also implemented, in cooperation with the OSCE, the following activities:

- Capacity building of the Ministry's Regional School Departments staff on implementation of regional action plans for the improvement of the education of Roma
- Promotion of the Decade of Roma Inclusion at the Ministry's Regional School Departments.
- Engagement of Roma Assistant Teachers as a support measure to Roma pupils, coupled by a conference: "Media Promotion of Roma Teacher Assistants' Activities in Teaching"
- The "Ethno - Historical Guide" has been drawn up, in cooperation with the OSCE, the "George Eckhart" Institute and representatives of the Ethnic Minorities Council.

9.2.2. Support to inclusion of Roma at the Level of Elementary, Secondary and Higher Education:

Affirmative actions:

Affirmative actions pertaining to the enrolment of Roma children into elementary education were proposed in March 2007⁶¹ and they include:

- Recommendation to the school districts to enrol Roma children into schools even if they did not have any documents - the school should inform the parents about the documentation requirements and should help them with establishing a contact with relevant municipal authorities. The latter is especially recommended for

⁶¹ The (then) Ministry of Education and Sports issued on 14 March 2007 guidelines to heads of school districts and principals of primary schools related to enrolment of Roma in primary education.

Roma who have returned from the Western European countries under the readmission agreements.

- Recommendations to take the results of pre-testing as a starting point for developing further plans for working with the Roma children, and not as a means for denying access to primary education or for placement into special schools. Also, a new test, suitable for the non-biased assessment of Roma children has been developed.
- Suggestions that Serbian language difficulties faced by Roma children can be decreased through the work of Roma teacher assistants, representatives of Roma NGOs and greater involvement of parents, especially during pre-school testing.

In accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Ministry has since 2003 taken affirmative action measures so as to increase the enrolment rate of as many Roma students as possible. In cases when a Roma student has passed the enrolment exam, but has not enrolled on a certain occupational profile, the total exam score has been increased by 30 points, thus enabling students to reach average score in a particular school and occupational profile. Additional criterion has implied possibility of placement of one Roma student (enrolled in such a way) in one class of each occupational profile. The number of enrolled candidates in 2007/08 (512) was 2.5 times higher than the number of candidates enrolled in 2005/06 (196).

Table 21.

ANNUAL INCREASE OF THE NUMBER OF ROMA NATIONALITY CANDIDATES 2005/06=100			
	Candidates		
	male	female	total
2005/06			
Number	104	92	196
%	100.0	100.0	100.0
2006/07			
Number	128	102	230
%	123.1	110.9	117.3
2007/08			
Number	280	222	502
%	269.2	241.3	256.1

Table 22.

PARTICIPATION OF ROMA NATIONALITY CANDIDATES IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES, %			
Schools and candidates	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Elementary schools	1181	1180	1185
Schools with ROMA candidates for enrolment in secondary schools	99	124	231
%	8.4	10.5	19.5
Candidates	85979	85761	82334
ROMA candidates (out of the total number of candidates)	196	230	502
%	0.23	0.27	0.61

Table 23. TOTAL SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATES AND SHARE OF THE ROMA ⁶²

	2002			2005/06		2006/07	
	Total	Roma		Total	Roma	Total	Roma
		Out of the total number	%				
Population aged 15–18	393888	8075	2.1	368903	7563	360264	7386
Those enrolled in secondary schools	310235	1058	0.3	293711	1002	290387	990
Total enrolment rates	78.8	13.1		79.6	13.2	80.6	13.4
Population aged 15	93901	2047	2.2	87359	1904	86946	1895
Those enrolled in the 1 st year of secondary school	88597	321	0,4	84.555	177	84276	207
Total enrolment rates	94.4	15.7		96.8	9.3	96.9	10.9

Table 23. shows secondary school enrolment rates, especially the share of Roma. Population measures are based on the data of the Statistical Office of RS, which underestimate the percentage of Roma in the population.

The largest number of candidates covered by affirmative action was enrolled in the health care sector: 35% in 2005/06, 21% in 2006/07 and 25% in 2007/08, then in trade sector: 13% in 2005/06, 24% in 2006/07 and 18% in 2007/08. The sector of economy was in the third place, while the fourth and the fifth place belonged to the services sector and sector of transport, respectively.

The Ministry of Education issued a Directive for the Implementation of the Common Registration and Application Procedure for Enrolment in the First Year of Study at the University. Pursuant to Article 7 of the Directive, the Ministry of Education collects individual applications of students with special needs and of those belonging to minority groups. Upon review of documentation and in cooperation with the relevant ministries, decision is reached on the possibility of enrolment, regardless of the budget quota and on the basis of affirmative action.

⁶² Source of population data is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia as follows: for 2002 - Population census; for 2005 and 2006, midyear estimation of population was made.

Lightly shaded data represent the estimation of the Ministry of Education, based on the available data of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.

Source of data (not shaded) on secondary school enrolment is the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Source of data on the Roma enrolled in the first grade of secondary school (177 in 2006/07 and 207 in 2007/08) is the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education has helped the implementation of the affirmative measure related to enrolment of Roma nationality students in state universities: 32 students were enrolled in school year 2003/04, in 2004/05 - 53 students, in 2005/06 - 67 students, in 2006/07 - 104 students and 107 students in school year 2007/08. The students were enrolled in the Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Economy, Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Philology and technical faculties.

There is a special project by the Province of Vojvodina that started in the fall of 2007. The project is supported by the Roma Education Fund and includes scholarships based on social criteria for students who enrolled into secondary education in September 2007. Under this project a total of 471 students applied for scholarships and 356 students was awarded a scholarship. In addition almost 100 teachers were appointed as their mentors in 78 secondary schools (including the so-called *gymnasiums*). A scholarship amounts to 48 euros per month. The agreement between the Province of Vojvodina and the Roma Education Fund is that the share funded by the Province will be increasing from 10% in the first year, up to 25% in the final (fourth) year of the project.

Table 24. Scholarships for Roma students in secondary education as of 2007/08. school year. Source: Secretariat for Education, Province of Vojvodina

	Scholarships awarded
I grade	147
II grade	85
III grade	90
IV grade	34

9.2.3. Forthcoming Activities within the Decade of Roma

Systemic activities and measures:

- Presidency over the Decade of Roma (by June 2009) and active participation in the planned international and national projects and campaigns.
- Increasing budget allocations on account of Roma programs from the current 120 million to approximately 500 million per year.
- Resolving the question of issuing personal documents for Roma population (there is a standstill which is reflected in a series of other activities, which prevents a portion of the Roma population from exercising their right to education, healthcare and social welfare).
- Increasing the involvement of Roma in public and political life (some 450,000 Roma accounts for approximately 5% of the overall population, and their involvement in public administration, local government and key sectors – employment, education, social welfare, healthcare is many times lower).
- Adopting the Anti-discrimination Law.

- Systemic resolution of the status of pilot projects which have proved efficient and sustainable in terms of improving the living and labour conditions for the Roma.
- Better cross-sector coordination of activities carried out by the public administration bodies in the implementation of action plans for the improvement of the position of Roma (implementing party – Council for the Improvement of the Position of Roma).
- More initiatives and more active participation of the Roma population itself in the development of policies dealing with the relevant issues.
- Stepping up the cooperation with the Roma non-government organizations.

Planned activities and measures in the area of education

- Increasing the number of Roma children in pre-school institutions and preparatory pre-school program.
- Increasing the coverage of Roma children who are enrolled and who complete the elementary and secondary school.
- Legally setting the procedures relating to affirmative actions in a systemic manner, which has proven to be successful (enrolment into secondary schools and colleges, scholarships, etc – see in greater detail chapter 10.3.).
- Providing free-of-charge textbooks and in-school meals for the impoverished children.
- Continuing with the training and engagement of new Roma teacher assistants in pre-school institutions and schools.
- Enabling learning of the Roma language for all Roma children.
- Enriching curricula with contents relating to the history, tradition and culture of Roma.
- Initiating the establishment of the Romani study group at the universities in Serbia.
- Increasing the number of Roma who earn a university degree.
- Enhancing the role of education counsellors and inspectors to monitor and prevent discrimination against Roma children in the school environment.

10. SUPPORT MEASURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

10. 1. Support Measures and Resources for school development and quality assurance

In order to address the inclusion of vulnerable groups in mainstream schools, several school-level programs have been used in the period from 2002. All of this assisted schools in building school-level capacities and creating a more favourable school climate for inclusive education. These programs are as follows:

The Ministry of Education and the
World Bank: School Development
Planning – School Grant.

The building of a quality assurance system for education in the Republic of Serbia was initiated in 2002 through the project branch of the Ministry of Education and the World Bank, named School Development Planning – School Grant. Approximately 830 schools have received training and have developed their school development plans based on the recording and monitoring of the situation, defining development priorities and development goals for a three-year period.

A new system for the evaluation and self-evaluation of the work of schools was established in parallel with the introduction of development planning, defining key areas of quality, as well as quality indicators at four levels. The handbook on self-evaluation and the evaluation of the work of schools, containing the self-evaluation procedure, external evaluation by education advisors, descriptions of the seven key areas and 52 indicators, as well as the instruments (questionnaires, checklists, scales) is used to make a review of the situation in order to provide an assessment. This handbook provides a useful guide for the application of the inclusive principles of work and the development of an inclusive atmosphere leading to the development of an inclusive culture and practice in educational establishments.

The inclusion index⁶³ is a collection of instruments used for supporting the inclusive growth of schools in the process of evaluation, planning and implementation.

⁶³ Booth T. and Ainscow, M. (2000, 2002) *Index for Inclusion: Improving Learning and Participation in Schools* (Bristol: CSIE)

Save The Children: Inclusion index

As part of the “Alleviation of the Effects of Poverty in Children with Special Needs in Serbia and Montenegro” (2005-2008) project realized by Save the Children and the Ministry of Education, the inclusion index was piloted and used in 23 educational establishments.

Open Society Fund: List of criteria and indicators of good inclusive educational practices

The List of Criteria and Indicators of Good Inclusive Educational Practice, piloted in 31 educational institution in Serbia, was developed from examples of inclusive practices collected from all over Serbia as part of the Inclusive Education – from Practice to Politics project. Over three hundred examples of good inclusive practices were collected. The list was piloted in five pre-school establishments and in 26 elementary schools. Six criteria and 32 indicators were developed, applicable at four levels of achievement. The list can be applied as part of the self-evaluation process of the pre-school/school institution. The published form of the List is usable at the level of an individual establishment or the local community, for the planning of inclusive development of educational institutions, and can be used as a starting point in the development of systematic support measures for inclusive education. The list and self-evaluation results in the pilot applications of the List have been published in the *Guide to the Improvement of the Inclusive Educational Practice* publication, created as part of the project.

10.2. Support Measures and Resources for the Protection of the right of the Child in the Education System

The readiness of the Government of the Republic of Serbia to establish a system of coordinated activities at the state level in the area of protecting and promoting children’s rights is reflected in the fact that the advisory Government body, *The Council on Child* was founded on May 16th 2002 and was tasked with initiating measures for the harmonization of the policy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in areas relating to children and youth (health, education, culture, social issues).

The basis for all activities and measures undertaken by the Republic of Serbia towards improving the state of the rights of the child is the *National Plan of Action for Children*. The document, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2004, was conceived and prepared in the Council for Child Rights.

The document relies on four basic principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

1. The right to life, survival and development
2. The best interests of the child
3. Protection from discrimination
4. Right of participation.

The priorities determining the National Plan of Action are as follows: poverty reduction, quality education for all children, better health for all children, the improvement of the position and rights of children with developmental disabilities, protection of the rights of children without parental care, protection of children against abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence and national capacities building for dealing with problems related to children.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has also adopted the *General Protocol for the Protection of Children against Abuse and Neglect*, as the basis for the development of special protocols for each line ministry.

The Ministry of Education has prepared and adopted the *Special Protocol for the Protection of Children and Students against Violence, Abuse and Neglect in Educational Institutions*. The Handbook for the Application of the Protocol is being prepared for the 2008/09 school year, along with planned training of employees in educational institutions. Preventive activities are included in the Special Protocol, and procedures for the protection of children against violence have been defined. The role of everyone involved in the work of the educational institution has been precisely defined. Based on the Special Protocol, and in accordance with the specificities of the work, the institution is obliged to define a Program for the Protection of Children/Students against Violence and establish a Team for the Protection of Children/Students against Violence. The Special Protocol is intended for headmasters, teachers, educators, professional service providers, faculty, children and students, parents, representatives of the local community, as well as for other relevant individuals and institutions involved in the prevention and solving of problems of violence against children and among children.

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with UNICEF and the line ministries, is currently implementing the *School without Violence* program in 126 elementary schools in Serbia (around 10% of the total number). The program currently involves 83,585 students and 8,397 adults, employees in elementary schools, as well as students' parents. The program is aimed at reducing and preventing violence among children and against children. It is intended for students, all school employees, parents and representatives of the local community. The program teaches constructive conflict resolution strategies, respect for differences and the development of tolerance, promotes student activism, networking and the cooperation of all relevant institutions. Detailed research on the forms and level of violence in elementary schools is also conducted as part of the program, with the results used as a basis for the selection of appropriate measures for child protection in each particular institution.

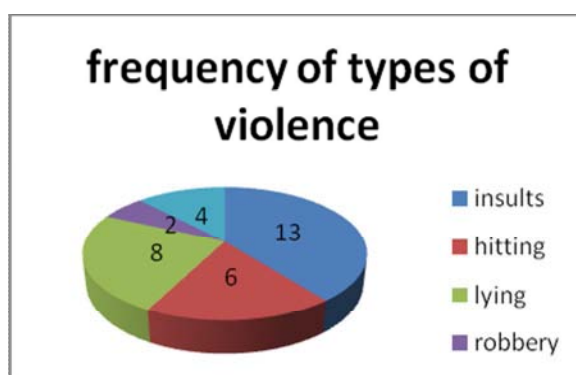
The results of research⁶⁴ involving students from the third to the eighth grade and all the school employees (26,947 students and 3,397 adults) from 50 elementary schools (2006)

⁶⁴ Data on the research in the report of SCHOOL WITHOUT VIOLENCE – Towards a Safe and Stimulating Environment for Children, Institute for Psychology of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Plut and Popadić, 2006

show violent behaviour to be present in schools, with older and younger students, boys and girls being equally prone to it. Forms of verbal violence are the most frequent – insults, name-calling, followed by social and psychological violence – mocking, gossiping, spreading lies, while physical violence is ranked third by frequency.



- 65% of the students have suffered at least one violent attack in the last three months.
- 24% of the students have experienced repeated peer violence (one or more forms)
- The research suggests very complicated relations in schools, because 28% of the children are in some way involved in violent peer interaction.
- The most frequent forms of violence are: verbal abuse – insults, followed by lying, improper touching, threats, beating, extortion, robbery.



- The most frequent forms of child response to peer violence are avoidance, responding in equal measure, deterrence by jokes and conversation. A large number of students react to violence with silence.
- 24% of the students have reported that teachers have been verbally abusive towards them in the past three months.
- Data also show that most students (75%) have friends in school and find school to be a friendly place. Teachers believe that better cooperation with parents (69%) and the development of communication skills (51%) can best contribute to the reduction in school violence.

The *Handbook for the Development of Anti-discriminative Culture in Educational Institutions* was developed in partnership with the Centre for the Rights of Minorities, a Roma-lead NGO, and the Ministry of Education. The handbook provides guidelines for detecting discriminatory activities and activities against the interests of the child in all aspects of school life. It is the obligation of the Ministry of Education to provide professional and consistent application of the document in practice, and use it while inspecting the schools.

10.3. Measures and Means of Support to Student Standard⁶⁵ in the System of Education

The Law on Student Standard (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” 81/92) regulates the right of students to obtain support in the process of education. Student standard institutions for secondary school students are student dormitories⁶⁶ (56), whereas student standard institutions for university students are student centres (9), student cultural centres (4), culture centres (1) and student camp (1).

Student standard (food and accommodation), as an auxiliary service in education, provides an incentive for further education for both secondary school students and university students from the economically underdeveloped regions and not so supportive social environments. Costs of food and accommodation for students whose education is financed from the budget of the Republic of Serbia and who are not residents of the place where their school/university is located and which fulfil the conditions stipulated in the Application for accommodation in the institutions of student standard, are subsidized by the state.

Table 25. Overview of food and accommodation costs for secondary school students

	Covered by the Republic of Serbia		Covered by the Secondary school student - beneficiary	
	RSD	EUR	RSD	EUR
ACCOMODATION – a month	6,130.00	77	740.00	9
FOOD – a month breakfast-lunch-dinner	5,820.00	73	2,250.00	28

⁶⁵ Student standard refers to secondary school students and university students

⁶⁶ For the purpose of this document, hall of residence means a building where secondary school students or university students live on full time basis.

Table 26. Overview of food and accommodation costs for university students

ACCOMODATION	Covered by the Republic of Serbia		Covered by the University student – beneficiary	
	RSD	EUR	RSD	EUR
I category	6,700.00	84	1,100.00	14
II category	6,440.00	81	840.00	11
III category	6,140.00	77	740.00	9
IV category	5,820.00	73	675.00	8
FOOD	4,800.00	60	3,270.00	41

It is envisaged to accommodate 16,100 university students in student standard institutions for university students in school year 2008/09. Accommodation in student standard institutions for secondary school students is envisaged for up to 10,000 secondary school students and about 530 students of non-degree higher educational institutions in the places where there are no student dormitories. Along with that, in the restaurants selected upon conduction of public procurement procedure, food is provided for about 300 students in places where there are no halls of residence.

The total capacity of the Student Dormitory “Mika Mitrović”, which is part of the Student centre Belgrade is 162 beds (8 single-bed, 62 two-bed and 10 three-bed rooms) – is envisaged for full-time students with special needs. The Institute for Student Health Care in Belgrade issues medical certificates stating the level and type of disability and whether a disabled person needs a companion.

Competition has been announced for secondary education scholarships in school year 2008/09 (available for up to 11,300 students) and secondary education loans for occupations in demand (available for up to 400 students). At the same time, competition has been announced for university education loans (available for up to 18,350 students) and university education scholarships. The number of scholarships for university students is not limited and depends on student academic success in university education. Indicators show that the number of secondary school students with average grade 5.00 increases annually which opens possibility for changing the final ranking list, following the decision of the Minister of Education. It should be noted that since the implementation of Bologna Declaration started, university education efficiency has increased.

Table 27. Overview of student loans and scholarships in 2007/2008

	UNIVERSITY STUDENTS				SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS			
	Loans		Scholarships		Loans		Scholarships	
Number of students	17 387		5 811		339		11 241	
Monthly amount	5,100.00 RSD	64 EUR	5,100.00 RSD.	64 EUR	3,000.00 RSD	38 EUR	3,000.00 RSD	38 EUR

In school year 2000/2001, 955 university students met the conditions necessary for receiving scholarship; in 2005/06 that number increased to 3,551, whereas in school year 2007/08 the number went up to 5,811. Bearing in mind the given data, it is expected that about 7,000 students will meet the conditions for receiving student scholarship in school year 2008/09.

Along with the regular competition and in order to overcome the lack of systemic solutions, the minister of education has been issuing, since 2005, a certain number of special decisions by means of which scholarships have been awarded to the following categories of students as well: to the Roma nationality students, to children of military and war invalids, to students from Kosovo and Metohija and to students with special needs, based on the lists submitted by the National Council of the Roma National Minority, Association of Military and War Invalids, Association of the Families of Kidnapped and Missing Persons in Kosovo and Metohija and the Association of Disabled Students. This number increases each year.

Table 28. Overview of loans and scholarships for secondary school students in 2007/08.

	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	MONTHLY AMOUNT	
		RSD	EUR
Loans for secondary school students based on competition	339	3,000.00	37.5
Scholarships for secondary school students based on competition	11054	3,000.00	37.5
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision, at the request of the Association of the Families of Kidnapped and Missing Persons in Kosovo and Metohija	49	3,000.00	37.5
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision at the request of the National Council of the Roma National Minority	138	3,000.00	37.5

Table 29. Overview of loans and scholarships for university students in 2007/08.

	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	MONTHLY AMOUNT	
		RSD	EUR
Loans for university students based on competition	17387	5,100.00	63.75
Scholarships for university students based on competition	5429	5,100.00	63.75
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision, at the request of the Association of the Families of Kidnapped and Missing Persons in Kosovo and Metohija	9	5,100.00	63.75
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision at the request of the National Council of the Roma National Minority	136	5,100.00	63.75
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision at the request of the Association of Military and War Invalids	104	5,100.00	63.75
Student scholarships based on special ministerial decision at the request of the Association of Disabled Students	134	5,100.00	63.75

In school year 2007/08, the Republic Foundation for Scientific and Artistic Youth awarded 111 scholarships to secondary school students, in the amount of RSD 7,500.00 per month on annual basis (12 instalments), 452 scholarships to university students in the amount of RSD 12,000.00 per month (12 instalments) and 118 scholarships to postgraduates in the amount of RSD 15,000.00 per month (12 instalments). It is expected that in school year 2008/09 scholarships will be awarded to approximately 150 secondary school students, 580 university students and 140 graduates, from this source.

Table 30. Scholarships awarded by the Republic Foundation for Scientific and Artistic Youth in 2007/08

	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES	MONTHLY AMOUNT	
		RSD	EUR
Scholarships for secondary school students	95	7,500.00	93.75
Scholarships for university students	452	12,000.00	150
Scholarships for postgraduates	118	15,000.00	187.50

10.4. Other Measures of Support in the Process of Education – Social Welfare⁶⁷

Matters of child/student care are addressed through cooperation and coordinated functioning of the social protection and health care system and the system of education. State aid policy aimed at facilitating the functioning of a family is determined by strategic development of sector policies.

(1) Strategic directions of activities aimed at improvement of child/student position should cover the areas which are essential for creating equal opportunities for children/students and for their inclusion. In the framework of social policy, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the new *Family Law* ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No. 18/05) in which, for the first time in our legislation, children's rights are legally regulated; moreover, special legal proceedings are envisaged with a view to ensuring the exercise of those rights.

Article 63 of the Family Law provides that each child shall have the right to education in accordance with its abilities, wishes and aptitudes and that a child aged 15, capable of reasoning, may decide which secondary school he/she will attend.

In the section referring to the rights of parents (Article 68) it is stated that parents shall have the right and duty to take care of a child; child care shall imply protection, upbringing, education, representation, financial support and management of child's assets. Parents shall be entitled to receive complete information about their child from educational and health care institutions.

Article 71 states that parents shall be obliged to provide elementary education to their child; as for the provision of further education, they shall be obliged to act in accordance with their full capacities. Moreover, parents shall have the right to provide education to their child which is in accordance with their religious and ethical beliefs.

(2) Within the framework of providing support to citizens entitled to material support, in accordance with the Law on Social Protection and Social Security of Citizens ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No. 36/91) and the Decision on additional rights in the field of social protection which is issued, in accordance with law, by each local government, *Social Work Centres*, as the main social protection services in the Republic of Serbia (total

⁶⁷ Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

number of centres is 139) shall provide free textbooks for the poorest families with school children at the beginning of each school year.

(3) ***The Law on Financial Support to Families with Children*** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” No. 16/02 and No. 115/05) regulates the right to benefits on account of pre-school institutions for children without parental care, children with special needs and the children from financially unstable families (Article 9, Paragraph 1, items 4, 5 and 6 of the Law). Benefits for children with special needs and for children without parental care shall be paid from the budget of the Republic of Serbia through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, whereas benefits for children from financially unstable families shall be provided from the budget of the local governments.

(4) Article 10a of the ***Rulebook on Criteria and Standards for Setting the Price of Services in the Field of Social Protection Financed by the Republic of Serbia*** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia” No. 15/92, No. 77/05 and No. 60/06) states the following:

(1) The amount of monthly benefit on account of child care in a foster family shall be determined on annual basis, in the amount of 52% of an average salary (without taxes and contributions) of the employed in the Republic of Serbia in the month of June of the current year and shall be adjusted each month in accordance with the index of costs of living.

(2) The benefit referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be increased on monthly basis as follows:

1) by the amount of allowance for providing support and care to another person, determined in accordance with the provisions regulating social protection of children with developmental disabilities as stipulated by the law regulating elementary education, except for children with minor developmental disabilities;

2) by 50% of the amount of allowance referred to in item 1 of this paragraph, for children with minor developmental disabilities, as stipulated by the law regulating elementary education, as well as for children on whom correctional measures have been imposed;

3) for a child paying for transportation because the school he/she attends is outside the place of child's residence, as follows

(1) by 7.5% of the salary referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article, for transportation to school located up to 20 km from his/her place of residence;

(2) by 11% of the salary referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article, for transportation to school located more than 20 km from the place of his/her residence.

(3) The increase referred to in Paragraph 2 of this Article shall be granted on condition that allowance for providing support and care to another person and travel expenses are not provided on another basis.

(4) Monthly amount of the benefit referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be increased once a year as follows:

1) for the expenses relating to textbooks and other school aids for the adequate percentage of an average salary of an employee in the Republic of Serbia during the month of June of the current year:

- (1) 20% for elementary education;
- (2) 25% for secondary education;
- (3) 30% for higher education.

2) for the expenses relating to graduation ceremony in the amount of 30% of average salary of an employee in the Republic of Serbia during the month of April of the current year.

3) for the expenses for holidays, recreation, outdoors teaching and field trips, in accordance with the confirmation and invoice of a pre-school or school.

(5) The benefits referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article may be increased by up to 50% for a child with severe and multiple development problems.

(5) The Law on Social Protection and Social Security of Citizens (Art. 26) stipulates the following: (1) Children and youth with special needs (mentally underdeveloped children and youth) shall be entitled to support for training for work, i.e. education and training for work (hereinafter: training), as well as the adults with disabilities who, based on their psycho-physical abilities and age, may be trained to work, but may not exercise that right on any other legal grounds. (2) Determining the type and level of disability, assessing the remaining work capacity and assigning to work training shall be done in accordance with the procedure stipulated by a separate law. Article 27 provides that the right to support in training may be exercised in the form of assigning to training; material provision; reimbursement of accommodation expenses; reimbursement of transport expenses and reimbursement of training expenses. Article 29a of this Law states the following: (1) A child without parental care and a child with behavioural issues placed in a social welfare institution or in foster care, who is not a full-time pupil/student, shall be entitled to reimbursement of training expenses. (2) Reimbursement referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article shall be paid to the training provider.

Provisions of the above mentioned laws define a considerable number of rights or measures which directly or indirectly enable children and youth, deprived of education owing to various reasons (either owing to mental underdevelopment, disability or the lack of parental care), to be included in the education process – in pre-school, as well as in secondary education or further training for work.

National Investment Plan Office and
the Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty
Reduction Strategy Implementation

Focal Point: project *Establishment of the Fund for Providing Support for the Education of Poor Secondary Students*

Project is implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Project activities are aimed at awarding 1,000 scholarships to poor secondary school students, along with the established system of mentor support (teachers from the school a child/student attends). The objectives of the project are the improvement of school achievement of the poor secondary school students. Competition is open for full-time students fulfilling the criteria related to material conditions (users of family financial benefits or refugees with income below the untaxed part of the salary), for students belonging to vulnerable groups (students without parental care, Roma students etc.) and for those whose school achievement has been above average in the last three years.

Establishment of the Fund as an institution which will ensure sustainability of project results is expected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REPORT

C1: The scope of children covered by non-compulsory pre-school education is small. Children from rural areas, children from families with low education attainments, Roma children and children with developmental disabilities are particularly lagging behind in preschool enrolment.. Pre-school education covers 45% of urban children and as many as 14.4% rural children. The number of children coming from families whose parents have completed only elementary school education is 7.5%, the number among the poorest is 7%, and only 3.9% among the Roma from Roma settlements. **The coverage by the compulsory preparatory pre-school program is also low for vulnerable groups.** Although the official data indicate that 99.6% of children were covered by it at the beginning of the 2007/08 school year, the real situation is somewhat less favourable. At the age of one year prior to enrolling into the elementary school, some form of pre-school education (full-time and part-time programs and four-hour programs).

R1: There is a need to establish mechanisms to identify and include all children in the system of pre-school education. Synchronization of activities in this field among the pre-school institutions, elementary healthcare services, social welfare services, social work services and civil society should help to reach-out and identify the children who are of age to attend the preparatory pre-school programs, in particular vulnerable children. Specific mechanisms and types of assistance at the level of local authorities to ensure an increase in the coverage of vulnerable children are: financial assistance, transportation provided, continuous communication with parents, advisory and educational work with parents, etc.

C2: There are no data on the **elementary school enrolment and completion**, in particular for children from rural areas, Roma children and children with developmental disabilities. The drop-out rate of children upon enrolling the elementary school is 5% on the average (95.6% enrol into the elementary school, 2005; 94% children of appropriate age), which represents a rather high number of children considering the number of 80,000 children. The drop-out rate of vulnerable children is significantly higher. Almost one fifth of children from rural areas fail to enrol into the elementary school (81.82% enrolled) and/or one fourth when it comes to girls. A specific problem is the data that adult education schools are mostly attended by Roma children (75-80%), even younger than 15⁶⁸!

P2: It is vital that the formal education system develops mechanisms which will prevent drop-out from schools and enable the returning of dropouts into the regular schooling system. Therefore, it is necessary to synchronize activities between the national authorities, local authorities, educational institutions and the civil sector, which will be directed towards two types of support – direct material support for students/children to become included and remain part of the education system on the one hand, and on the other hand, support schools in creating and improving conditions which are important for retaining children/students from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

⁶⁸ The law stipulates that adult education schools enroll students older than 15, the so-called over-aged elementary students. Children aged below 15 should attend the regular school system; the contents and methodology applied in adult education schools are not appropriate for their age.

C3: A significant number of youth do not finish secondary school education and are not able to find a job. The Roma population is still the most disadvantaged (in particular girls which enter secondary schools in a significantly lower percentage), as well as children with developmental disabilities who have at their disposal a limited number of secondary schools and jobs. **Education coverage at secondary school** level is between 76% and 86%. Coverage of vulnerable children is significantly lower, in particular the youth among the poorest population and the youth living in Roma settlements.

R3: It is necessary to establish full support mechanisms for the enrolment and retaining of youth in secondary schools, in particular those coming from vulnerable groups of population, including scholarships, stipends, mentoring, support for extracurricular activities etc.

C4: Pre-school institutions and schools are more openly expressing their positive **attitude towards inclusion** in education. However, in real life this process is rather slow followed by a number of obstacles and resistance. Bias is still often present among teaching staff and school management, and many justifications for postponing the practice of inclusive education are sought at school level (e.g. lack of staff, class size, facilities not adequately equipped, the staff not trained to implement inclusive practice, lack of expert support, etc).

R4: It is necessary to ensure high level commitment to the inclusive direction in education development, in strategic documents and legislation relating to education. This is a precondition for introducing changes into the curricula of teachers' training colleges, teacher professional development programs, non-teacher staff training programs, different involvement and participation of parents in the work of schools and a more active role of local governments with regard to ensuring better conditions for education for all members of the community.

C5: Legislation regulating the field of education is not sufficiently harmonized with the principles set forth by the Law on Fundamentals of the Education System. Among others, the 1984 Law on Education of Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities is still in force. This law limits the right to education under equal conditions, since it envisages education based on the type and level of disability in special schools established for educating children/students with the same type of disability.

R5: It is necessary to reform and harmonize legal regulations in the field of education so as to ensure a consistent trend of development and functioning of the education system in line with the inclusive principles, and a coherent downsizing of the special education system. The legislative framework of the education system should regulate the manner of implementation of inclusive principles, through each level of education, enabling horizontal and vertical mobility through the system.

C6: There are no systemic solutions for ensuring continuous support, procedures and mechanisms for achieving inclusive education. The situation in the field of education of students with developmental disabilities at all education levels still indicates a **high level of exclusion and segregation** of the student population in terms of the organization of the education process. For these students it is still extremely difficult to be enrolled in mainstream education at all education levels, in particular at points of transition from one education level to the next.

R6: It is necessary to establish a systemic framework, which shall enable the development of appropriate procedures and mechanisms for implementing inclusive education. Furthermore, it is necessary to fully train and professionally develop teachers and professionals working in elementary and secondary schools for working with vulnerable groups of students, so that as many students as possible from these categories may be included in the regular system and that they remain in the system.

C7: The current Law on Fundamentals of the Education System does not envisage **the engagement of teacher assistants**⁶⁹ in regular pre-school groups and/or regular school classes in which there are students with minor developmental disabilities. On the other hand, educators working in those institutions think that the engagement of a teacher assistant in a regular group/class may significantly help the work with the child/student and thus contribute to a more effective realization of curricula, objectives and tasks of the education process.

R7: The Law does not forbid the engagement of teacher assistants. A pre-school institution/school may envisage in its development plan the engagement of teacher assistants, or may make a decision on engaging a teacher assistant in a group/class at its professional/teachers' council, as a solution for optimization of the educational process of a child/student.

C8: **Education of students with developmental disabilities** in the Republic of Serbia is dominated by the concept of special/separate education reflected in the organization of education institutions for such children/students and in the characteristics of curricula implemented in these institutions. There are elementary and secondary schools for children with developmental disabilities in the Republic of Serbia, which are designed and organized on the same principles, according to the type of disability.

R8: It is necessary to raise awareness of those employed at the pre-school, elementary and secondary level on the right of every person to education under equal conditions for all, through professional development of teachers in the sense of inclusive approach and/or higher competencies for working with every child/student. The development of a

⁶⁹ Assistant in a group/class: a person in charge of assistance and support for the child/student with disabilities/specific characteristics attending a pre-school institution/school according to an unadapted curricula or individual educational program.

positive and encouraging environment in the group/class is the best guarantee of an effective implementation of a curriculum, objectives and tasks of the education process.

C9: Individual educational program – IEP is not recognized by the legislation as a stipulated measure of individualized work with the child/students with disabilities/specific position.

R9: It is necessary to define the category of the Individual Educational Program – IEP in legislation and ensure procedures, mechanisms and instruments for their implementation and validity in the educational process.

C10: The 1993 Law on Textbooks and Teaching Aids, as amended in 2006, fails to regulate the issue of adapting the format of textbooks intended for persons with developmental disabilities.

R10: It is necessary to adopt a new Law on Textbooks, which would provide for the responsibility of the publisher to ensure accessibility of schoolbooks in a format adapted for the students with developmental disabilities.

C11: In case of illiterate adults and **adults who have not completed elementary school education** (some 23% of the population aged over 15), the formal education system does not provide adequate institutions, programs and qualification opportunities which would ensure access for this category of population.

R11: It is necessary to establish mechanisms for identification and inclusion of this group into the education system, ensure an institutional framework and support for schools (adaptation of the working organization, curricula, working methodology, material conditions, etc.) to provide also quality education for the adults. It is necessary to synchronize activities implemented by the state, local government, education institutions, civil sector in this respect.

C12: As for **adults with disabilities**, the formal education system, which is underdeveloped (there are 16 adult education schools in Serbia), is completely inadequate and without clear standards for the development of multifaceted educational models accessible to adult persons with disabilities.

R12: It is necessary to develop models and standards, as well as specific measures to encourage education of adults with disabilities.

C13: “The Second Chance” possibility for **secondary, vocational and professional education** through the formal system is insufficiently used by adult students, because the schools are insufficiently adapted to the adults in respect of their organization, working methodology and contents.

R13: Schooling as “second chance” should be supported and strengthened, so that all persons who drop out of the system are given the opportunity to make up for the lost, gain a vocation and enter the labour market.

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Useful Links:

Government of the Republic of Serbia: **<http://www.srbija.sr.gov.yu>**

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Serbia: **<http://www.mps.sr.gov.yu>**

Institute for the Assessment of the Quality of Education: **<http://www.ceo.edu.yu>**

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